

FAITH AND FREEDOM



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A JOURNAL OF PROGRESSIVE RELIGION

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Two Challenging Books—Editorial

TWO books of unusual significance for Liberal Religion have come our way in recent months. One is published in America, the other in England; and the sooner that each is made available on the other side of the Atlantic the better!

The first is *The Primacy of Worship* by Von Ogden Vogt, from our Starr King Press, Boston, 1958 (\$5.00). Here is a masterly development of the thesis that worship is the natural core of each and every religion. It also substantiates beyond all expectation the tentative conclusions arrived at in our *Editorials* two years ago (Nos. 26 to 29) where we sought the religious solution of the Theist-Humanist controversy in the unifying experience of our free worship.

The ethos of worship is claimed by Dr. Vogt to be universal, whatever the theological belief or rites so variously practised. His demonstration of the principles and pattern of worship should serve as a guide to all those who are engaged in developing experimental forms. Dr. Vogt writes with a fine style and there are several passages well worthy of a place in our own non-biblical lectionary.

As he builds up his case for the Primacy of Worship, he rejects all religions based on credal belief and especially those characterized by the dogmatic attitude. And why? Because dogmatism fosters obscurantism, encourages duplicity, confounds education, disbars seekers, promotes aggression, threatens social order and stifles growth. While, over against all these evils stands that free worship which is in spirit and in truth. It is all most stimulating.

And yet, in spite of our warm approval, we cannot avoid one note of criticism. Dr. Vogt, a classical scholar, exalts the three classical values, truth, beauty and goodness, into three religious absolutes. All that he claims for them in the structure and spirit of worship is unexceptional, but is there not a fourth absolute? Where is the outstandingly Christian virtue of love, without which we are as clanging brass or tinkling cymbal?

The three religious necessities—'faith, morals and celebrations'—with which he opens, should surely be four, and the fourth, we suggest, should be 'affections'. Love is, of course, mentioned (we noted eight passages) but it comes in incidentally, as if taken for granted, and is not directly associated with the exalted classical trinity. So, even great men have blind spots! That which is most familiar is most likely to be taken as understood, and never explicitly stated.

Blake broke with the classical tradition and taught of the fourfold vision and the fourfold regenerate man. Jung has given cumulative evidence that the basic structure, as well as the imagery of the human psyche, is universally fourfold, as we also have found it excitingly corroborated in the ritual sand-painting of the Navajo Indians. The Human Fourfold is Blake's version of Jung's four

modes of experiencing reality—Sensation, Reason, Intuition and Emotion, which in turn correspond to the four supreme values: Beauty, Truth, Goodness and Love.

What we have said in no way affects our very considerable debt to Dr. Vogt for having given us a splendid vindication of our free worship. It may seem ungracious to have suggested that his thesis might have been even more complete but he may be the first to admit that the Temple of Worship might have a fourth pillar. Being such a lovable man himself we suggest that he had it behind him when he viewed the other three!

Our second book is *Mithras—The Fellow in the Cap*, by Esmé Wynne-Tyson (Rider, London, 1958, 15/-), who is to be welcomed also as the contributor of an article elsewhere in this issue. The title seems innocent enough—almost jocular—and the purpose equally innocent, for, prompted by the recent discovery of the remains of a Mithraic Temple in the city of London, she sets out to discover what happened to Mithras, the Phrygian Sun-God.

The disappearance of the Cult of Mithras, the chief rival of Christianity for the first four centuries of our era, does constitute a very real historical mystery. Popular religions are the least likely to pass from the memory of man. They may change their form or their name, go underground or waste slowly away, but they do not disappear leaving only archaeological relics unless their votaries are exterminated and the whole culture to which they belong completely destroyed. This annihilation we know did not take place. Except for the slaughtering of some priests, the destruction of some Mithraic temples with all their literature and records, the vast mass of the people went on their way . . . *to be baptized as Christians*. This wholesale nominal conversion could have been only to a Christianity that had lost its high standards, accommodated itself to the world, sought security and power, put theological creed before Christian living, and so debased itself to the level of its popular rival that St. Augustine records: "I remember that the priests of the Fellow in the Cap used at one time to say 'Our capped one himself is a Christian'."

The Dutch liberal theologian, Professor Heering, in *The Fall of Christianity*, raised a question complementary to that raised by our present author. He showed that Primitive Christianity was devoted to the non-violent spirit of its founder to the extent of requiring that no Christian should serve in the Roman legions. Yet, long before the end of the fourth century, protected by the state, instead of persecuted by it, the Christian Church had effected a complete *volte face* and now supported the state in making it a capital offence to refuse to bear arms. This complete reversal is as puzzling to many devout Christians as the disappearance of Mithraism is to the historian, for, was not this change in Christian faith and practice a betrayal of the life and teaching of its founder? And did not the Roman Church teach and practice after 311 A.D. things which Jesus had explicitly condemned?

We suggest that "What happened to Mithraism?" and "What happened to Christianity?" are not really two mysteries but two sides of the same mystery. Mrs. Wynne-Tyson offers a solution of the first which goes far towards solving the second. She writes: "Gods as ancient and tenacious as Mithras are not easily vanquished, and his cult . . . has succeeded in perpetuating itself through the rites, ceremonies and in many of the beliefs of a Church dedicated to the pacific and compassionate Christ."

The short answer to both problems seems to be that Christianity adopted the spirit and many of the tenets and practices of Mithraic religion—that essentially masculine religion of physical bravery, of warrior kings who ruled by divine right, that religion of authority, state power and nationalism, which sanctions violence and bloodshed and justifies atrocious crusades—and, since the fourth century—all in the name of Christ!

Is it only a pseudo-Christianity that has been the formative religion of Western civilization these twenty centuries? Is it the vicar of a Mithraic Christ who is enthroned at the Vatican? If so, the story of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov* takes on an even deeper significance. For, if the main thesis of *Mithras, the Fellow in the Cap* is substantiated, it will do more to undermine the position of Christian Orthodoxy—Protestant as well as Catholic—than the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Perhaps you will want to read this book and see whether the evidence and arguments convince you. It won't be easy to face all the implications even for Unitarian Christians—unless they also happen to be pacifists. But we should welcome the truth even if it upsets our preconceptions.

CRITICAL EXCHANGE

Exit Theology?

LEO F. KOCH

IT seems to me that the crux of the differences of opinion between Editor E. Shirvell Price and myself rests in our different view of values and purpose. This is apparent from Price's statement that "Dr. Koch may well laugh at this, but, . . . I beg leave to place my faith in something which is not so far evident in Dr. Koch's philosophy—A Purpose in Life. I mean a purpose which, from the religious angle, is experienced as transcendent and which, from the theological angle, is seen to be immanent in the whole cosmos, and at a potentially higher level in man."

This view of purpose is certainly directly opposed to a scientific one consistent with the facts of organic evolution. Conscious purpose is apparent only in *Homo sapiens*. Any faith in a purpose beyond human life or "immanent in the cosmos" is pure fiction.

Human values arise from the intelligent reaction of human beings to the facts of their existence. It is the nature of the beast which determines the nature of its values.

Price is, he wrote, sympathetic with, and understands, agnosticism about God, and so presumably he is also "sympathetic with," and "understands" agnosticism about Purpose—but he fails to practice it. Are we now to place our trust in a transcendent Purpose because Price or one of his theological superiors declares his faith in it, or are we to evaluate it in the light of objective evidence as we should all of our value-judgments?

In other words, are we committing ourselves primarily to the methods of natural science or are we placing our primary reliance on revelation, scriptural authority, intuition, or pure reason? Having been raised as a Roman Catholic, I can understand, vaguely, what is meant by a "cardinal sin," but "theological opprobrium" is a verbal horse of a different color. Having compared the constructive role of modern science in society, and the laggard role of religious institutions since the rise of modern science, I restate my firm conviction that ignorance of biology and natural science among religionists is, for them, a cardinal sin. If this be belligerence, we need more of it.

Much as theologians and metaphysicists of the classical school would like to gloss over the facts of life, these *are* primarily biological. Churches have served, and continue to serve food; their buildings include urinals and water closets whereas very few research laboratories find it necessary to study theology or speculative metaphysics.

The realistic and successful foreign policy of the Communists is based on the premise that food, clothing, and tools take precedence in the scale of human values over high sounding, moralistic slogans. When the basic needs of men and women want fulfilment, secondary goals such as morality and ethics have little practical significance for the vast majority. Obviously, it is better for society if both sets of needs can be fulfilled. Obviously there are many individual exceptions to these generalizations but these exceptions do not appear to be found only in certain professions or occupations.

Proper motivation comes from proper training, discipline, and practice. It is possible for both religionists and scientists to be mistrained or to be defective in practice. Viewed objectively, the history of religions is a deplorable mess, studded with few successes and many tragic faults. Nevertheless, I will not disparage nineteenth century religionists, and I did not disparage nineteenth century scientists. I do disparage twentieth century Unitarians, because they are not as militantly liberal as I would like them to be.

But history, after all, is valuable only as a consideration of its facts leads to further knowledge and wisdom. It is precept exemplified by historians, religionists or scientists which determines the quality of training and discipline received in the preparation for those professions. The various subject-matters themselves are lifeless and

therefore have only the moral significance which is given them in application by an individual.

But anyone who seeks "pie in the sky" in the form of a transcendent "Purpose" will not understand such a concept of values. Here is a crucial assumption in the acceptance or rejection of which biological knowledge can be decisive. The facts of genetics and organic evolution, which are not now merely theory, are aligned solidly against the possibility of a "Cosmic Purpose." Against them stand only the pomp of theologians and the cant of speculative metaphysicists.

The influence of modern science comes precisely from its transcendence, on a realistic level, of the ideas of philosophy and religion. Scientific knowledge is based on the experience of "whole" men, whereas philosophical truth is *merely* intellectual in nature, and religious truth is even less sophisticated than philosophical truth as it is founded only on emotional convictions. I am not stating that "whole" men have no use for mere intellect or for emotional conviction, but I am stating, unequivocally, that scientists, *at their best*, are using their intellects and their emotions in the most constructive and reliable manner that is possible for human beings. Without scientific knowledge, philosophers and religionists, *at their best*, are hopelessly less efficient than scientists. Those who will not submit their intellects and emotions to the discipline of natural science are at least 300 years behind the times.

How anyone can claim that the hypotheses of science have not had "anything directly to do with the immediate problems of ordinary human existence or with the tragic situations in which mankind is placed today," as imputed by Price, is inconceivable to me. Is modern medicine not the product of scientific advance? Are industrialism and mechanized production of food not the products of science? Is anyone about to deprive his children of the benefits of modern medicine and technology, and resort to the medical practices and technology of the middle ages?

For some strange reason, religionists disparage science because "it" does not, and cannot do this or that for us. Their implication is that science should titillate and inflame the same passions, neuroses, and desires as do art, philosophy, and religion.

And so Price states the obvious, that, "scientific education does not, of itself, tend to make a man more religious." Are we to assume by implication that religious education, of itself, tends to make a man more scientific? Both propositions are patently false. Religious practice *may* tend to make a man more religious, and scientific practice *may* make a man more scientific; or it may not!

On the other hand, I am prepared to claim that scientists are fully as conscientious in the practice of science as are religionists in the practice of their religious beliefs—if not more so. In which pursuit lies the greater virtue? I say science and Price will say religion.

The ancient gobble (which means to make a noise like a turkey cock or gobbler) that, "religion comes in to transcend scientific truth with moral truth, emotional truth, and aesthetic truth," is by now hackneyed and shopworn. If transcendence has occurred, it must be the other way around: the greater practical and theoretical importance of science leads me to conclude that religion and art have been transcended. Actually, transcendence is a mythological concept.

It seems to me that truth of all kinds, be it scientific, artistic, philosophical, or religious, is at the same plateau—if it is genuine. Different kinds of truth have different functions. However, in that science has made significant progress, and religion has not, their relative importance and significance for moderns have changed correspondingly.

Because religionists have tried to ignore science and its increasing importance, it is religion which has neglected the immediate problems of man over the last 300 years. In the name of theology, the welfare of man on earth has been sacrificed. In spite of the efforts of scattered liberals, the religion of western culture has remained orthodox—insofar as it can be said to have a religion.

An important factor in this failure to progress in religion has been the intellectual dichotomy maintained by both scientists and religionists between their disciplines. Is not our problem today that of benefitting from whatever both science and religion—as well as all other social institutions of our society—have to offer? Are not all of these institutions moulding us, even as we mould them according to our goals and ideals? Is it not co-operation that is needed rather than competition?

Unfortunately, until we relinquish such archaic ideas as transcendence and theology, co-operation is difficult. One cannot compromise with a dogmatic or absolute truth. Science cannot actually be intraverted; nor can it be extraverted. Both science and all of living, of which science is a part, are processes in which humanly intraneous and extraneous factors are involved. The success of scientists depends on their ability to abstract from this process the extraneous factors and symbolize them into meaningful systems.

Because of prejudice the abstraction of the intraneous factors has not proceeded so well. Success here depends on the willingness of people to participate in planned experiments. Religion, it seems to me, is the greatest obstacle to social experimentation, because it is still dominated by medieval ideas by and large.

Too obviously, scientific evaluation of art and religion is not the type prevalent in our society. It may be that a little less dramatic, moral, or spiritual impact from the Sermon on the Mount would leave us, in this modern age, infinitely the better. If Unitarian ministers had scientific advisors perhaps they would not still be preaching about ludicrous ideas such as "Paradise Unregainable," "What Shall We Mean By God?" "God is Necessary," and

"Dialogue Before Death" which filled the latest number of *Faith and Freedom*.

Let's face it, all aspects of our society will be dominated more and more completely by non-religious science (Russian and Chinese style) unless religious people busy themselves with humanizing or religionizing science. This cannot be done by ignoring it. It can be done by learning from science what it has to teach, and then integrating it with our religious feelings. This *is* my purpose in life.

Not so Fast, Dr. Koch!

E. SHIRVELL PRICE

WITH considerable diffidence, because it involves criticism of another man's faith, I submit that Dr. Koch's foregoing reply cannot be taken as a serious answer to the case I made against his thesis. He reiterates in different words the same unacceptable arguments without any real development. His is a far too limited conception of value, as pragmatic or instrumental only, to carry him safely into the realms of philosophical or even psychological discourse.

It may well be that "Human values arise from the intelligent reactions of human beings to the facts of their existence," but that does not account for the whole realm, or dimension, of value, because of which there is an implicit or explicit value-judgment in everything man says or does.

If Dr. Koch had presented Biology in anything like the terms used by George Wald, of Harvard, in his article "Innovation in Biology" in the *Scientific American* last September, we should have been grateful for the enlightenment. As it is, we are left with the unfortunate impression that he is striking out against everyone who does not see life through his own scientific lenses, rather than building any bridge of understanding between science and liberal religion. If he persists in lumping religious liberals together with theological obscurantists he will do the cause of religious humanism a disservice, as well as frustrate his own declared purpose. If he was not brought up on the Bible he might still take a mature interest in the Wisdom Literature, and also check up on *Matt vii*, 1-3.

It should not be necessary to tell Dr. Koch that a Unitarian has no theological superior, in the sense of an authority which tells him what he should or must believe theologically. Nor do I, as a Unitarian, expect anyone to accept my faith in a Purpose just because I hold it. Nor does faith, as distinct from verifiable belief, depend upon the sort of evidence which scientists produce from examination of the phenomenal universe. Faith is there before we start looking for evidence: it sustains us in our search and research: it bears us up through failure and success.

A scientist, entering the realm of philosophy, is at the very bottom of the ladder if he is unaware that science stands on two

assumptions which every scientist has to accept, whether consciously or unconsciously, as an act of faith: (i) that the phenomenal world is knowable, and (ii) that the human mind is capable of understanding this phenomenal world in a way which leads to true knowledge. Dr. Koch seems to imagine that existence is an oyster only to the scientist. Because Epistemology and Philosophy in general are outside his scientific field, they are not, therefore, non-existent.

True to his reading of science he seizes upon my faith in a Purpose as the crux of the difference between us—a purpose which *he* says finds no basis in the scientific reading of the facts of organic evolution.

The more roundly Dr. Koch denounces my faith in a Purpose as “pure fiction”, the more he convicts himself of having a one-track mind that sees only one type of truth as important for life—the scientific. Has he never stood in awe before beauty or sensed the encompassing mystery of his own self-conscious existence: has he never been in love?

All the time he argues like an un-self-conscious child who is so fascinated by the objective phenomena of the world around that he hasn't yet begun to be critically aware of himself as a knowing, feeling striving, being, or of the problems that this awareness involves. Attention directed overlong on one aspect of a man's environment—physical or mental—is known in Psychology as fixation.

He chides me with lack of sympathetic understanding of his agnosticism about Purpose. I *have* sympathy with his state of innocence, or should I not call it ‘ignorance’? Let him take note that I do not call it culpable ignorance—or sin. I understand why he is so enamoured with the truths and efficiency of science: I also remain hopeful that he will not remain in his present state of arrested mental, scientific and religious development.

Whatever he may mean by scientific humanism, which cause he claims to espouse, his arguments and conclusions show him to be a dogmatic mechanist who believes that empirical data and the laws deduced therefrom determine the goals of human striving, moral regeneration and spiritual fulfilment.

I deny flatly that they do or even can. On the contrary I affirm that the myopic self-sufficiency which conceives of science as capable of determining the norms and goals of life constitutes a menace to human well-being—the direct opposite of the succour which science should surely bring to man.

But I am willing to meet Dr. Koch on his own level of a rational belief (rather than faith) in Purpose. He says that conscious purpose is apparent only in *Homo Sapiens*. But has he never heard of an un-conscious purpose? Are instinctual drives in organic life understandable in any other terms than those of unconscious, purposeful striving? Does not the whole gamut of human needs spring from sub-conscious levels, and is not their satisfaction at every level directional or purposive?

I would further counter Dr. Koch's denigration of Purpose with the considered opinion of another scientist,—Sir Alister Hardy, Linacre Professor of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy at Oxford.

"When we hear biologists asserting the mechanistic view of life, let us realize that this is not an established Scientific fact, it is simply their interpretation of the facts—and I believe it is extremely damaging to civilization to present this view as if it were a firmly established part of science. Who is there who has studied the behaviour of animals in nature who can honestly say that the animal, as a whole is behaving like a purely automatic machine? . . . Its actions appear by any common-sense description to be purposive . . . Whether there is any purpose in the lower organisms, biology cannot say—any more than it can say whether or not animals are conscious about two, at least, of the greatest attributes of life as we ourselves experience it—consciousness and sense of purpose—biology can say absolutely nothing. What right then has the mechanistic biologist to deny the validity of certain other attributes of life which many feel to be just as real as consciousness, the sense of the sacred—the sense of mystery—the sense of communion with something in the Universe they feel to be greater than the personality of the individual self—the something they call God? . . . The sense of the sacred is as much a part of the natural history of man as is sex, or his feeling of sex . . . Some people may think it right that biology as a science should confine itself to that marvellous extension of physics and chemistry that we call physiology. But if they wish so to limit biology let them not call it an entire science of life." (*Faith and Freedom*, Vol. ii, p. 59):

As far as I am concerned, Dr. Koch has his choice. *Either* he extends Biology to encompass *all* aspects of life and gives place to the concept of purpose—or he sticks to his self-limited scientific last and provides us with better scientific shoes whereby we may tread more happily the path of life. He must not think that he can persuade, let alone coerce, Unitarians into believing that the excellence of the footwear he may provide justifies him in hectoring those who prefer to go barefoot or in home-made sandals—nor can his empirically valuable shoes determine the goals of man's pilgrimage.

He may think that my metaphor is strained, so he shall have it, again metaphorically, straight from the shoulder. I do not think he knows where he stands philosophically or religiously. I do not believe that it is possible to 'religionize science' except by making it a complete science of life and living. But this is what he explicitly refuses to do. What he is, in fact, doing is to take his own essentially mechanistic view of science and brandish it as a dogmatic Scientism.

Speaking, I believe, for a majority of religious liberals, and especially for Unitarians, I refuse to submit to the dogmatism of any totalitarian ideology, whether it be Catholicism, Communism or Scientism. Does not this whole attitude lay him open to a charge of having exchanged the totalitarianism of Catholicism for that of Scientism, not forgetting his bow to Communism by the way, because it had had some success in playing upon the natural human desire for economic betterment?

If scientists are going to play this sort of game under the cloak of a religious purpose we should have it clearly acknowledged what sort of world they intend to build.

Theology, which he is so anxious to show the door, *may* be

made more scientific, but Religion cannot become scientific without ceasing to be Religion. We can have a valid Science of Religion, but both a Scientific Religion and a Religionized Science are impossible hybrids. In the first place we would have the perverse faith in mechanism, with its topsy-turvy concept of values, masquerading as Religion; in the second, another bird of the same feather, Scientism, also masquerading as Religion.

I am sure Dr. Koch wants neither a pseudo-Religion, nor a pseudo-Science, but that is what he is unwittingly, arguing for. I ask him to think again, and take some time over it, before devoting the rest of his life to the fulfilment of that purpose. There is danger to-day that the particular perspectives of some scientists will encourage them to try to make Religion more scientific. Both Religion and Science will lose their separate integrities in the process. Unitarians have no antagonism to Science, but they have a justifiable suspicion of the pseudo-Science of Scientism which pretends to dogmatise on the goals of life. If Scientism should prevail it will have driven out, not Bad Theology, but True Religion.

Unitarian Illiteracy among Biologists

ROY HARTKOPF, of Melbourne, Victoria

THE article, "Biological illiteracy among Unitarians" (*Faith and Freedom*, Autumn 1958) exemplifies what appears to be a cardinal sin among specialist scientists of the middle twentieth century. In spite of an almost universal lip service to culture and the humanities, nine out of ten scientists are grossly ignorant about any matters outside a narrow scientific field . . .

Speaking as a humanist (after Dr. Koch's article I would not dare to call myself a scientific humanist), I have found by the hard way of personal experience that my fellow humanists can be every bit as narrow, limited and dogmatic as any fundamentalist, and I have come to the conclusion that how one believes is sometimes much more important than what one believes.

There is a great need to deal with the critical problems of the twentieth century; radiation damage, population control and the like. It is often necessary to try to draw people's attention to the importance of such matters. But again I have seen such matters becoming an excuse for not doing anything practical or concrete. They are used as political clubs to belabour a government of the 'wrong' political colour. So the solution is perhaps not so simple after all.

My own ideas on materialism are perhaps more advanced than those of Dr. Koch. I recently designed and built a machine for the Melbourne Science Museum. This machine will play a faultless game of 'noughts and crosses' against a human opponent. I built it to try to show the similarity between the working processes of computing

machines and the human brain. The machine of course has a narrow inflexibility of purpose which one finds in specialised organisms, but even this one-eyed outlook is an illustration of a not uncommon human shortcoming. Computers which translate from one language to another and compose song hits, and many other cybernetic marvels make it impossible in my opinion to find any province of the human brain which cannot theoretically be simulated by a machine.

But 'the cardinal error' (to quote Dr. Koch) is to imagine that, because one's own ideas are valid, another person's apparently different ideas are not. To say that phrases such as "religion of the inward revelation" and "religion of the larger affirmation" is mere gobbling is to be as narrow in one's outlook as any fundamentalist who summarily dismisses Darwin. "Not one scientific statement is allowed to creep into your editorial . . ." What is Dr. Koch's definition of a scientific statement? Is it the kind of statement made by his fellow scientist Eric Ashby? In his book *Scientist in Russia* Ashby, after alleging that Burbank and Michurin were both clever gardeners who had no proper scientific basis for their work, goes on to say, "Both America and the Soviet Union set store by *practical results* so that in the eyes of *simple people* Michurin and Burbank became famous." (My italics.)

Or, talking about death one could quote Norbert Weiner, one of the fathers of cybernetics who has written much of importance. But in one of his books he comes out with the statement: "the stable state of a living organism is to be dead." After this one could hardly fail to agree with Dr. Koch that death is no mystery. It is merely the stable state of a living organism.

Dr. Koch's own statement that dependable knowledge is the necessary basis for successful living could bear some examination. It seems, if anything, rather less scientific to talk about dependable knowledge than to talk about inward revelations. The latter does take into account our subjective limitations. Dependable knowledge means all things to all men. Who, outside an asylum, holds on to any knowledge which his experience has shown him is not dependable? "Dependable knowledge" is an abstract concept something like an absolute and dogmatic concept of God."

Some time ago I met a hypno-therapist. We were talking about the effect of the mind on various physical ailments and vice versa. He showed how certain kinds of warts could be cured by giving the patient a conviction that they would be cured. He explained that some apparently ridiculous cures were actually quite effective simply because they gave the patient the conviction that he would be cured. I found all this most interesting as I had had warts myself. I told him I had approached the problem in a scientific way. I had tied cotton round the base of the wart, and with the blood supply restricted the wart had soon disappeared. My friend gave an angelic smile. "Of course it would," he replied. "You believed in

your method." Thus my scientific method and the methods of superstitious old ladies who buried pieces of steak in the moonlight were irrevocably equated.

Provided one has a sense of humour and can take such experiences they can produce a most profound inward revelation. Before this incident I tended to assume that since my outlook on life was dependable knowledge—which of course it was or I would not hold it—then those who had a different outlook must necessarily be making a mess of things and should be shown the light.

Nowadays I am a little more careful. I first look to see if the others are making such a hopeless mess of things after all. If they appear to be managing fairly well I begin to ask if there is not some basic law which explains not only why my ideas work but why their ideas are valid also.

It is relatively easy to show how unscientific most Unitarians are. It is almost as easy to show how unscientific most scientists are, but neither pastime is particularly profitable. It is more difficult but much more profitable to try to find some basic comprehension, some larger affirmation which explains just how and where these apparently incompatible views fit in as facets of a wider reality.

Commentary on Four Articles

FRITZ MARTI, of Dayton, Ohio

THE authors in the Summer 1958 issue seem to represent a cross-section of what goes on under the name of liberal religion these days. Unfortunately the spell of science and the ensuing scientism has not yet been lifted.

I. It is high time that everyone who calls himself liberal should clearly know "that the truths of religion were not of a scientific order" (page 103). This is old and basic philosophical knowledge, for one of the tasks of philosophy is to distinguish between the different universes of discourse. Tom Wardle says too little when he gives credit for such knowledge only to mystics.

Wardle's distinction between escapist and existentialist religion is lucid but leaves the matter at the factual level without asking why the escapist, in all honesty, cannot see the strictly personal challenge which faces the existentialist. The latter senses that religious reality is not objective. (Nor, at that, is it subjective.) Objectivism must either deny the reality itself (as any genuine scientism will deny it) or else objectify (deify) it and thus escape from its real challenge, retaining only the duty of blind obedience.

II. J. Ford Lewis sees that, thus, the individual's integrity is at stake and that objectivism "often operated to crush him in the name of religion." (112) Lewis implies but does not quite say that Christianity cannot very well cleanse itself of objectivism without

so thorough a metamorphosis that the word Christian loses its flavour. It looks as if Lewis had found, in Stockton, a Unitarian Society which is clearly post-Christian. May it grow in wisdom and grace!

III. George H. Williams is of the old guard which would retain the Christian name by hook or crook. He says: "The task of an ambassador is to remain scrupulously loyal to his own country" (122) and then, by a twisted analogy, he claims: "It is the same in interfaith relationships." It would indeed be the same in the relation between escapist religions. But deeper religiosity knows no territorial faiths. Williams does not see that, by now, all such faiths are in heresy, standing apart from the great historical tradition of thought which no longer tolerates the monopolistic claims of such faiths. There is a quaint trace of guileless monopolism in Williams' dictum: "Unitarianism must remain, or become again, articulately Christian in order to continue to perform its bridge or ambassadorial role between Christianity and the other religions." As if it was not precisely the ever present duty to be cleanly articulate which has forced modern man beyond the boundaries of the religions, including Christianity. And what about the other religions? Are their ambassadors to have similar extra-territorial status among Christians? —Virginia once claimed all the territory to the Mississippi, and hence West Virginia has retained the Ohio river as its property. This saves Ohio the expense of maintaining the bridges and the trouble of fishing for corpses beyond wading distance. Yet religions cannot but plunge beyond waist depth. The non-Christian religions will hardly grant that only Christians can build passable bridges, and they surely will want two way traffic.

After Spinoza, Vico, Lessing, Schelling, in our days of Schweitzer and Tillich, it is much too late to ask informed and thoughtful people to think of themselves merely as "a loyal opposition within the Great Church" (123) and to cover up the abyss between the old dispensation which takes symbols literally and the new which sees them as symbols, by such political slogans as "being loyal to the common Sovereign, who is Christ" (123). And if Unitarianism ever "was the first Christian body in America to apply the principles of the growing natural sciences to religion" (123) we now certainly know that the application of conditional patterns to unconditional problems can result only in confusion. Williams himself senses this when he recognizes "that man has another reason, which his scientific self knows not of." (126) Why does he not say that this reason (which Kant called *Vernunft*) quite methodically explores ontology, while the scientific reason (*Verstand*) deals with objects? Why does Williams not join the Great Community of occidental thought which can and does furnish a "distinctly religious position of its own"? He who has found solid ground under his feet, no longer needs names for his position, neither Christian nor Unitarian.

IV. The community of thought is the true tradition. It is high time that we acknowledge this fact. Bruce Findlow defines tradition as "what has been believed" (129). True tradition leads to the believable which ought to be held fast and which grows in ever required new translations. Findlow, who would start from subjectivism, from an Inner Light, cannot but feel that the acknowledgment of the supertemporal, of the ontological Ought, is "respect for an external authority." (130) Findlow could read in Fichte that external authority is non-I, and in Kant that heteronomy, though it may produce respect, cannot bring genuine obligation. Nor can subjectivity furnish "a very effective authority" except under that Light which mystics and Quakers have long seen, and which the great followers of Kant made conceptually clear again. It had before been brought into focus by such thinkers as Plotinus and Master Eckhart.

Findlow is on the right track, though. "Unitarians must create or re-create the techniques of discussion and active inquiry (as opposed to passive assent)" (130) which are nothing else than philosophical discipline. Findlow deplores "that our first lack is a theory, of the congregation." (131) Theory comes from *theorein*, to see. We can clearly see where we ought to stand. Our first need is the courage to take our stand in the world-wide, time-pervading congregation of thinkers. Any group of people who recognize that they are personally responsible guardians and therefore augmenters of the tradition, have unity in freedom. We are united in the quest for truth, but each one of us must conscientiously word and reword what he finds. As in a good Quaker meeting, but on a conceptual level, we ought to discuss the theological and historical (and therefore ethical) problems of our day. And like the Quakers we can be grateful for the blessing that meanings require wordings, and that words can establish a community of understanding.

We know that every formulation of a truth at once requires reformulations, that our knowledge is never final and can be called, with Nicolas of Cusa, *docta ignorantia*. He whose words are final is a magician; he masters the gods. But we know that when we have spoken we must speak again and better. True worship is the recognition that we can never finally plumb the depth of truth. And such worship is truly public though, perchance, silent. Ecclesiastic jabber, moaning and chanting are too often but incantation.

Is Particularism Necessary?

FRANCIS TERRY, of Ringwood, Hampshire

THE Rev. H. Lismer Short's article "God Is Necessary"* gives an admirable introductory description of the nature of religion and the grounds of religious faith. But then he disturbs me by completely disregarding (if not, indeed, denigrating as bogus) the type

* Previous issue (No. 34) p. 19

of religion to which my own faith bears witness, and which I thought was characteristic of Unitarianism.

I agree when Mr. Short says that religion is what we find as we draw near to the "boundary positions" in which our habitual wordly assumptions cease to be adequate, that it is "given" to us rather than made, and that it involves moral choice. But he then proceeds to assume that what is given to us in this way is "*a religion*" (my italic)—"Christian or Buddhist or Moslem or what you will," with "certain distinctive characteristics," which one cannot "water down for the sake of a more diffused religiousness" without serious loss. But that is the exact contrary of my experience. I find that the nearer I come to "boundary positions" the more I realize that "*a religion*" is not good enough, that what is distinctive and particular in my religious attitude is merely part of my temporal and fleshly self, that I must reduce myself to humility and ignorance, that I must put my trust in the universal goodness which is beyond all our notions and images, and that I must give myself to a spiritual unity which embraces all religions and non-religions. In this, I am not conscious of "watering down" anything. Rather, it is something "given" to my faith as the one alternative to total despair. When I accept this faith, it involves the moral choice of being a Unitarian, in spite of this being ridiculous by the standards of the world.

I should have thought that, in a general way, this was an exceedingly common type of religious experience. In its specific form, I should have thought that it was central to Unitarianism. Why, then, should Mr. Short ignore it?

Of course I do not mean that any man's religion is confined to what he finds in boundary positions. It has to spread out into a system of moral and intellectual attitudes, impinging upon the various problems of his time and place. But the boundary-positions are where religion has its roots.

Perhaps we are being driven to realise that Unitarianism is not adequately described when presented as a derivative of orthodoxy, but has its own root.

Philosophy Versus Religion

ESMÉ WYNNE-TYSON

KANT, who was surprisingly lacking in both psychic and spiritual experience, dismissed the religious features of Platonic philosophy as "Mysticism", and in his system (that otherwise owed much to Platonism) dispensed with any idea of God as factual being. This resulted in his peculiarly arid, though morally lofty, concept of the Categorical Imperative as the Highest Good. He has frequently been described as "the founder of modern philosophy". As we look

about us at the chaos, materialism and violence of the present age, which cannot be divorced from its prevailing philosophy, this hardly seems to be a recommendation.

His *Critique of Pure Reason* is a valiant, if turgid and obscure, attempt to separate philosophy from the spiritual hypothesis upon which both Plato and Plotinus built their superb systems; eventually, by the use of reason alone, he arrived at an inadequate approximation to that very hypothesis. He believed of Reason, as the materialists of our day believe of Science, that it could eventually provide a sufficient explanation of life, without spiritual aid. He also imagined that it could constitute the ultimate form of government through man's acceptance of the Categorical Imperative of the Moral Law. But of how the common man was to be brought to the voluntary acceptance of this aid to self-government when it conflicted with his desires and passions, the philosopher gave no hint, beyond assuming that the means would be the same as the ends, and that reason *per se* would lead to the acceptance of reason, as an omnipresent guide and counsellor. But this conflicts with what Kant so highly rated—empirical experience, which teaches us that the majority of mankind are far from rational and are continually swayed by far stronger and more compelling forces than pure Reason.

It is true that the noble morality enshrined in the concept of the Categorical Imperative appeals to what is finest in man, and might well be accepted by other philosophers and the *élite* of the human race—intellectually, at any rate. But, in practice, desire plays havoc with the best of moral resolutions, and the trouble with the exalted and austere Moral Law is that it lacks the short-term attractions of the temptations of the flesh. Noble and necessary as it may seem when Mind, or Reason, is enthroned, it assumes the most shadowy and intangible proportions when weighed against some vitally urgent human desire. In fact it becomes the metaphysical "What ought to be" as distinct from the all too demanding "What *is*". For instance, while Sophocles from the heights of Reason wrote:

Not to be born is past all prizing;
But when a man has seen the light,
This is next best by far, that with all speed,
He should go thither, whence he came . . .

Kant's conviction of the truth of the first line did not prevent his begetting a large and, as it happened, most ungrateful family, and he certainly did not take the advice contained in the last lines, for he lived to the age of 91 and then was said to have died 'through excess of joy' at winning a literary prize!

From the conflict with desire, as Schopenhauer was afterwards to point out, Reason seldom emerges victorious. Only that which transcends this conflict can resolve it, and the Christian believes that such transcendence may be found in basic Christianity.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant writes: "The whole

interest of reason, speculative as well as practical, is centred in the three following questions: (1) What can I know? (2) What ought I to do? (3) What may I hope?"

The Christian may choose to answer them in the reverse order.

(1) "*What may I hope?*" For him the answer to this must lie in the single, sublime utterance, "Be ye . . . perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." No more exalted aim than this can be conceived, and nothing less than the highest good conceivable can satisfy the heart of man, or what is thought of today as the evolutionary urge. But to achieve this ambition,

(2) "*What ought I to do?*" Again the answer is found in the New Testament: "Pray without ceasing". Desire this consummation unceasingly, beyond all else, for desire has a potency inexplicable by reason, as the Founder of the Christian Faith knew and proved; and he who set the goal also describes the means by which it may be achieved when he says: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

This was evidently the explicit teaching on the nature of prayer that Jesus Christ left to his followers, for in 1 *John* v, we read: "If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have desired of him."

This can mean nothing else than that when we pray to be perfect we must know, despite all the testimony to the contrary, that in our essence we are already perfect; that, as Plotinus put it, we are connected through Soul with the unfallen intellectual Principle that has never severed its connection with The Good. In theological terms, it is to acknowledge the Christ within. For perfection involves a great deal more than being just a normally good, moral human being. It is to be nothing less than the image and likeness of the Highest Good. But in order to know ourselves in this condition, it is essential first to understand clearly the nature of God, which brings us to the last question:

(3) "*What can I know?*" "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free": the truth about the nature of the Highest Good, which is the essence of one who sincerely prays. The Christian believes that this nature was manifested on earth by Jesus, the Nazarene, who taught explicitly that God was perfect: that He was Spirit: that He was omniscient and omnipresent: and taught implicitly, and by his deeds, that God was unchanging, compassionate Love and Wisdom, and His will, unwavering benevolence.

All men can know this, and when they truly know it, they can reasonably be expected to love such a nature with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, thus obeying the greatest commandment of both Jews and Christians. And when we love something so utterly and unutterably in a completely surrendered way, we have but one desire—to be at one with it. Therefore the only hope worthy of mankind, the only hope that can bring about man's spiritual evolution,

is to be at one, inseparable from, identical with, the Ideal Perfection that the theologians call God. The only worthwhile actions are those which lead to this unification, which is the 'knowing' indicated by one who had himself achieved such unity. This type of knowledge is to "have experience of", and constant experience of the Highest Good, is heaven—the heaven which he who dwelt there told us was *within* us. And dwellers in heaven inevitably radiate the divine nature, the wisdom, beauty, compassion, love, truth, joy, power, intelligence of which they are constantly aware on account of the Godward focus of their attention.

This is the vision that he who prays must hold consistently and constantly as being the truth about himself; and he must not deny this vision in his manner of thought and life, but must believe that he *has* the answer to his petition, and act as far as in him lies, in conformity with it. Five hundred years before Christ, Plato was giving the same instructions for the spiritual evolution of mankind, when he pointed out that whether the Republic he visualised ever came into being on this earth or not, "it is laid up in heaven as a pattern for him who wills to see, and seeing, to found a city in himself. Whether it exists anywhere or ever will exist, is no matter. His conduct will be the expression of the laws of that city alone, and of no other."

This recipe for regeneration, while it includes the full acceptance of the Moral Law as a Categorical Imperative, infinitely transcends it. The Christian mystic does not govern his actions by cold reason alone, demanding before he acts, as Kant suggests he should, "Would I wish this to become a universal practice?" Instead, he instinctively measures all things against the nature of the Beloved and knows immediately when thoughts and acts are incompatible with the divine vision, refraining from them for the single reason that if they were indulged he would, in the moment of indulgence, be separated from that which he loves with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. Such separation, to the true lover, must be the misery of hell.

The Philosopher might mentally be able to resist temptation, but when reason comes into conflict with desire, the latter only too often insists that the former shall do some special pleading in order to justify the indulgence of its irrational urges; or else "old barren reason" is divorced from the bed and the philosopher takes "the daughter of the vine to spouse." It was not only Socrates's reason, but his integrated love of The Good which enabled him to resist the advances of the beautiful Alcibiades. For only when the love of The Good is greater than any lesser desire will man be able to resist all that the world, the flesh and its glamorous evil can offer him.

Reason alone, however, cannot hope to arouse that integrated and overwhelming love, for Love itself is the power which inspires such feeling, the magnet that irresistibly draws; and Reason demands that Compassionate Love shall be subservient to its own dictates. Therefore the acceptance of the rule of Reason—which, however, as a ladder, an aid to understanding, should never be despised—

cannot ensure at-one-ment with compassionate Love; and without that unification there can be no full satisfaction or sense of completion for, beyond all else, the Highest Good is Love.

It is precisely the lack of this feature that is so much in evidence in the world of today, where the emphasis is all on power, violence and scientific intellect with its insatiable and devastating curiosity which overrides, by means of materialistic reasoning, all claims of mercy and compassion. So that, although the influences of Freud and Marx are the more obvious, it is not difficult to trace the influence of Kant's essentially masculine and cerebral philosophy in the present world situation. It should be admitted, however, in fairness, that he would probably be appalled at the manner in which his Deity is used by the materialists.

He could not have foreseen that Reason might one day be employed by those with a genius for perversion, who could prove on perfectly reasonable grounds that all moral law must be subservient to class warfare. His God was a patently inadequate one, but he never had any intention of advocating the devil. His *schema* was intellectually admirable but emotionally deficient. As Schopenhauer observed, referring to Kant:

"An action, he says," (i.e. in the *Critique of Pure Reason*) "has no genuine moral worth, unless it be done simply as a matter of duty, and for duty's sake, without any liking for it being felt; and the character only begins to have value, if a man, who has no sympathy in his heart, and is cold and indifferent to others sufferings, and who is not by nature a lover of his kind, is nevertheless a doer of good actions, solely out of a pitiful sense of duty."

Schopenhauer then condemns this assertion as being revolting to true moral sentiment, an "apotheosis of lovelessness, the exact opposite . . . of the Christian doctrine of morals, which places love before everything else, and teaches that without it nothing profiteth." (*The Basis of Morality*. Trans. A. B. Bullock).

In a word, Kant, believing himself wiser than the Greeks, or, indeed, than God, planned a system without a heart. But without a heart there is, finally, no life, and Kant's *schema*, which has so effectually permeated modern philosophy, may well account for the death-wish which is such a feature of this age.

If Philosophy is to prove a blessing rather than a bane to mankind it must have the humility to accept once more its heart from the hands of religion.

The Phenomenology of Grace

H. W. TIEBOUT, Jr.

IN the Creeds of Christendom, God is referred to as "the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth." The terms "Father,"

"Almighty," and "Maker" (or "creator") point to two main functions of Deity. (a) God is an alleged factor in the physical ordering of the world. God is a force, a power, conceived as personal, with a will and intentions. God operates in a purely objective manner—bringing rain, sunshine, flood, drought, disease, etc. Nothing in the world can resist the power of this God. (b) God is an alleged factor in the value-ordering of the world. God is that which overcomes the threat of non-being, of meaninglessness, of moral condemnation.

(a) *God as a principle of physical ordering.* To the primitive mind, all things are caused by gods. The thundercloud is a god—or at least the dwelling place of a god. There is no distinction between the natural and the supernatural, because everything is supernatural, everything is miraculous. The lengthening of daylight after the winter solstice is an annual miracle.

As man comes to form an idea of an order of nature and as he begins to form some idea of the basic patterns of regularity in nature, the function of Deity as related to the physical order changes in one of two ways. God may become purely supernatural, over against the natural. His function then becomes that of interfering with natural laws and manipulating people and things for various allegedly "higher" purposes. Belief in this type of God is superstition—as the neo-orthodox freely acknowledge.

God can also become, however, the inexorable order of nature itself or the Power which displays itself through this order. This is the view of Einstein and Spinoza. In this case, it is difficult to see what would be accomplished by arguing about the existence of God. The argument would seem, actually, to involve two other issues: (1) How should one try to conceptualize the Power that is behind everything? This is a complicated topic of metaphysics and philosophy of science. (2) Is there sufficient common ground between this absolute and the "Supreme Being" of traditional supernaturalism to justify the use of the term "God" as a name for it? I suppose this is a question of semantics and morals (in the sense of intellectual honesty). Can we *worship* that Source of the universe? And if so, should we call it God or Nature?

(b) *God as a principle of teleological ordering.* Phenomenologically, God as "creator" and as "father almighty" is that which overcomes man's estrangement, conquers the threat of non-being. According to Tillich, man encounters non-being in three areas: ontic non-being—the total destruction of man; moral non-being—the annihilation of moral integrity in the experience of guilt; spiritual non-being—the experience of utter meaninglessness. The experience symbolized by "Almighty God" means, first, that neither your death, nor that of your loved ones, nor of the whole human race is a permanent threat (this is symbolized as "eternal life"). The symbol "almighty God" means, secondly, that there are moral resources that can pull you out of the lowest depths of moral depravity, that

you can never sink so low, nor be so filled with self-hatred and with a sense of standing condemned, nor so helpless in the face of irrational hatreds and passions that it is impossible for you to make a fresh start. This miraculous re-creation of moral integrity is the most powerful manifestation of what is traditionally called "grace." Finally, the symbol of Almighty God means that nothing is without meaning, nothing is absolutely futile, no suffering is totally in vain. The suffering of the innocent, the destruction of whole cultures, the continuing prosperity of the wicked—even in these evil things there is some redeeming feature.

Ontologically or cosmologically, God is the cause of this "God-experience." That is, the God-experience cannot be reduced to neurological reactions or unconscious associations with childhood traumas. No known or knowable combination of physical and psychological factors can explain the God-experience, just as no combination of physical and psychological factors can explain love in its full spiritual dimension.

I take it that the various forms of "humanism" would modify the phenomenological description and deny altogether the ontological assertion. The adherent of scientism would, I suppose, on the one hand deny the ubiquity of the experience of non-being. He would try to show that this type of experience is comparatively rare and is correlated with economic and political insecurity and with certain pathogenic childhood environments. In rejecting the ontological assertion he would explain the God-experience in terms of physical or unconscious psychological mechanisms.

The basic assumption of scientism is that both the experience of estrangement and the experience of divine grace are due to psychophysiological factors. In theory, at least, psychologists and physiologists would be able to control these factors. Ideally, preventive medicine could keep people from coming down with the sickness of estrangement. And if by oversight a person did contract estrangement, the doctors could supply a sin-antidote, a kind of grace-vaccine. Less ideally, educational psychologists would be able to prevent people from developing sin-feeling, which is what Freud originally hoped. And those who did develop estrangement-symptoms could be cured by scientific psycho-therapy. The miracle of grace can be explained as transference love, catharsis, abreaction.

I suppose that an adherent of scientism might believe in some kind of deity. Freud himself permits the symbol *Logos* to be used. But this Deity cannot do anything other than symbolize the order of nature. No psychological effects can be attributed to it. And I should think the adherent of scientism would always be tempted to analyse his own thin religion in terms of some kind of Oedipal situation.

The liberal rationalist has a more difficult position. Like the adherent of scientism, he is committed to the view that man is active, that he achieves salvation by controlling things—not by receiving. But the liberal rationalist denies the all-sufficiency of the

engineering technique. He cannot fall back upon the hope of sin-vaccines and grace-pills. *He must fight it out on the phenomenological level and show that there are experientiable human powers that can be mobilized to overcome the experience of non-being.*

I regard Erich Fromm as an excellent example of the problems facing the liberal rationalist. For Fromm, as is well known, nothing is higher, finer, or grander than man. Man must be himself and for himself. He must embrace the world, and find communion with the world. He must create a meaning to life. In various places in his writings Fromm acknowledges a difficulty of carrying out this project. He refers to certain "existential dichotomies." When he comes up against this encounter with non-being, he moves in several directions. Sometimes he relapses back into scientism and explains the experience in terms of pathological authoritarian family environments and economic systems. Social and psychological engineering can change that. At other times, he moves into a Stoic rationalism or even Existentialism. Grit your teeth, accept death and meaninglessness, and make what you can of life. At still other times he moves toward a mystical solution in which a trace of passivity enters in. We find meaning by merging with the All. (Cf. *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, pp. 94-7).

John Dewey makes a most instructive contrast to Erich Fromm in this connection. Dewey, unlike Fromm, was not preoccupied with problems of a spiritual nature. Dewey was too busy with his social reforms to worry about the encounter with nothingness. But, Dewey never committed himself to the view that there is nothing higher than man and never committed himself to the "moral athleticism" of Fromm. When Dewey touched on the ultimate questions, he recognized the phenomenology of estrangement and acknowledged completely the phenomenology of grace. And, moreover, he did not try to explain them away by reference to hypothetical psycho-physical factors. Although Dewey was chary about the use of the term "God"—being aware of the systematic perversion of the term by the Fundamentalists—he clearly had a conception of something roughly corresponding functionally to "God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth." (Cf. *Experience and Nature*, pp. 417-21, *A Common Faith*, pp. 13-26, 32-3, 42-3, 50-1, 53, 68, 85, *Human Nature and Conduct*, pp. 263-4, 330-2).

In Stoicism and existentialism, the theist-nontheist or passive-active issue becomes even more critical. The ancient Stoics found it increasingly difficult to believe that any human being could become a sage (*sophos*) by affirming the reason (*logos*) or ruling principle (*hegemonikon*) within him. This makes Stoicism wide open for a theory of grace in which the *logos* is bestowed upon man through mystical stoicism: the intellectual love of the soul for God is part of the very love by which God loves himself. Nietzsche represents the go-it-alone type of stoicism in which there is no *logos* and which leads into Existentialism.

In Existentialism the ruling principle of the soul is not reason so much as will. In the so-called "atheistic existentialism" salvation consists in the formal act of affirming one's power of affirmation in a totally arbitrary way, in taking upon oneself all the absurdity and guilt of life. Sartre is the purist of this type. Heidegger is given surreptitious assistance by his mystical concept of Being, and Jaspers has the experience of the Comprehensive, which functions as "God the Father Almighty."

Sartre, so far as I know, simply has not faced the phenomenology of grace. He understands only its authoritarian caricature—so, also, with Freud, and, for that matter, with Fromm, most of the time. Ontologically, for Sartre, the existence of God is a contradiction in terms.

To try to pull this rambling discussion together, the theist vs. non-theist issue seems to involve: (1) the phenomenological question of the extent, the seriousness, and the value of the experiences of estrangement and grace; (2) the ontological or cosmological interpretation. I take it that all shades of liberals would agree in denying the supernaturalistic conception of a "Supreme Being." Such an entity contradicts science and is not necessary to explain the phenomenon of grace. The question is: how should we honestly symbolize or describe that which is the source of (1) the physical order and power of nature as revealed by science and (2) the teleological order as revealed by the experience of grace? Should we call (1) God and (2) sub-conscious impulses? Or should we call (1) Nature and (2) God-within-man? Or call both God? Or not use the word "God" at all?

The Kingdom of God:

In Refutation of the Eschatological Theory

COLIN J. GIBSON

HOW did Jesus think of the kingdom? Did Jesus think of the kingdom as present and spiritual, or future and material; as inward or outward, natural or miraculous?

This is a burning question crucial to Christianity. If the claims of the eschatologists are admissible, then Jesus taught that God was very shortly going to establish a new order, the Kingdom of God, upon earth by supernatural action. If that is so, then Jesus taught, not *sub specie aeternitatis*, but in the light of the approaching end. Several important consequences ensue. Firstly, Jesus was not only mistaken but misled, and probably disillusioned. He became the victim of a popular superstition and his greatness is diminished. Secondly, the validity of his ethical teaching is largely taken away, since it was only for the time being, an interim-ethic. Since Jesus was above all a prophet of the kingdom, and since the thought of it is in the forefront of his mind from beginning to end of his teaching,

how he thought of the kingdom is not a side-issue but central to our understanding of him. He took up his ministry, proclaiming "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (*Matt.* iv, 17), and laid it down, saying, he would "no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when he drank it new in the kingdom of God": *Matt.* xxvi, 29, *Mark* xiv, 25, *Luke* xxii, 18.

Harnack maintains that "the kingdom is presented in two different aspects, sometimes as belonging to the present and sometimes to the future; sometimes as private and spiritual, sometimes as external and material", and concludes that the two ideas are practically irreconcilable. Which then is predominant, which the kernel and which the husk?

Two themes will run through my argument that the present and inward aspect of the kingdom is the kernel. First, Jesus is by any estimate greater than his contemporaries, and is far more likely to have had an original conception of the kingdom than to have borrowed the popular idea. His religion rises in an inward source, and his ethics stem from his religion, independently of time and place. It is therefore far more probable that he gave his own meaning to the kingdom than that he took the current view. Secondly, all great ones have to some extent been misunderstood by their contemporaries or have only been partially understood, so that it is likely that what he said would be understood not as he meant it, but as he was taken to mean it. The popular conception is much more likely to have been accredited to him than anything of deeper spirituality or greater originality. Therefore what stands out in Jesus's teaching of the kingdom is not where it agrees with the general expectation but where it stands out from it and goes beyond it.

Jesus would start, no doubt, with the ideas of others, but he would quickly come to his own conclusions. To take the nationalistic aspect of the kingdom, Jesus would seem to have taken the current view at the outset, for he instructed his disciples, when he sent them out, "not to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; yet this was he who was to depict the Samaritan as the good neighbour whom the careful Jew, who kept every commandment, had to copy if he were to inherit eternal life. So, in the Gospel, we have seemingly contradictory words concerning the place of the chosen race from the lips of Jesus himself. It may be that he himself changed during his ministry, and learnt as he went along where the truth lay, or, possibly, there may be the intrusion of another view than his own into the account.

This latter would seem certainly to be the case with the insertion of the passage in *Matthew* concerning the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, where Jesus speaks of "my church", and with some, at any rate, of the Apocalyptic passages, like the long description in *Mark* xiii, referring to the imminent Second Coming, or the description to the disciples in *Luke* xvii. This last passage follows immediately as a comment upon the saying of Jesus, found in *Luke* only, concerning

the inwardness of the kingdom. The saying of Jesus is: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! for, behold the kingdom of God is within you (*entos umon*)'." This is the text round which the battle of apocalyptic rages. As it stands it means what it says. It is reluctantly acknowledged by Guignebert—a sound and honest scholar, even though his findings are vitiated by his lack of religious feeling—that "linguistic arguments seem to justify the translation of *entos* as within", although he adds "but probability is definitely against it". He, like others, would like to translate it "among" instead of "within". Defenders of the liberal Christian position, such as Renan, Harnack, Tolstoi, James Drummond and Dean Inge, who at all costs must preserve the greatness of the man, regard this text as the key to the understanding of the Gospel. On the other side, Guignebert, Loisy, Schweitzer and other radicals, and also some Catholics and orthodox Protestants, have tried in vain to dislodge the text from its meaning of "within". Their arguments are far too slight. Guignebert, one of the best of them, remarks rather lamely: "Jesus could hardly tell the Pharisees, without appearing absurd, that the kingdom of God was within them, in their hearts". He then adds, most amazingly, that "none of the disciples, who were all authentic Jews, could have understood such a strange utterance, which is unsupported by any teaching in the Gospels". "If this saying", he adds, "is the focal point of the whole teaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom, its isolation is incredible". "Isolation"? We shall see.

Surely the idea of a God who governs an inward kingdom of heart and soul and mind is to be found in Psalmists and Prophets, who pour out their troubles and raise their praises to God, their Governor, and reiterate their demand for a loyalty founded in behaviour to a God who minds what men do. "The righteous God trieth the hearts and the reins", says Psalm 7. And what about Psalm 51, the Psalm accredited to David in his remorse over Bathsheba, the repentant cry: "Create in me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me"? But chief of all, let us take the New Covenant itself of Jeremiah, whence the name of the New Testament derives: "I will set my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it". Jesus surely knew the great literature of the prophets and psalmists as well as, if not better than, the sensational and modern rage for Apocalyptic. "They have Moses and the prophets", he said, "let them hear them"; no miracle will make the atom of a difference. Jesus shows again and again that he stands in the true line of the best in his tradition, and epitomises it in his own life and teaching. How natural it is that he should take up again the deeply spiritual and moral strain of the great teachers of ancient Israel and call his compatriots back to "the hole whence they were digged, the rock whence they were hewn"! His appeal was to the response in

them to the ever-present God, whose evidences abound in Nature and in the spirit of Man within.

Jesus was awakening the sense of God, who knew the thoughts of the heart before their utterance, and was cementing a relationship between God and each single person who had the ability to pray, "Our Father". "Pray", said he, "to your Father", adding, by way of caution, not overmuch, but sincerely; not in public but in secret, down in the depths of your own natures, where communion with God is held, in the inner chambers. A teacher who taught a religion, personal and intimate, of the soul with God, who based a moral system on the unique value of each person to God who loved him, and argued for Immortality, because a relationship with God could not conceivably be broken, was certainly in order in saying: "The kingdom of God is within you".

The entire Sermon on the Mount, which is a collection of sayings rather than a sermon, is a description of spiritual law at work. It starts with the conditions of blessedness, and whichever version we take, *Luke* or *Matthew*, it is still the case that our future blessedness depends on our present state. First we must hunger and thirst, and know what it is to be without, if we would have our need supplied. The pure in heart have for their reward, not a place in the kingdom, but the sight of God. The peacemakers are blessed, not because of a future recompense, but because they are being like God, their Father. It is because God has established His throne in the hearts of men and is all-powerful there, that the poor shall have the kingdom of heaven and the meek shall inherit the earth. "The meek shall inherit the earth" is a recollection of Psalm 37, where the meaning is certainly that the justice of God will secure it, since God is God and right is right. The purpose of living is to be true to our nature as children of the Father. Are we to do as others do to us, or do to others as God does to us, and show the divine greatness?

It is all religious teaching, and very inward religious teaching. There is not a word about the kingdom in the whole of the sermon, except in a present spiritual sense, and then only in passing reference. There is the prayer, "Thy kingdom come", and it is to be noted that it comes between two deeply inward expressions: "Hallowed be thy name" and "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". It is a prayer for the worship of God and service of Man, and envisages the time when Man will hallow in his heart God's name and be devoted to doing God's will. "Thy kingdom come", therefore, is not a request to God to inaugurate a new order, but dedication of ourselves to promoting that kingdom in our own thought and mind here and now. If we are to accept the eschatological theory, the value goes out of the Lord's Prayer, and we, who use it, now understand it in a deeper and truer sense than the Master himself who gave it to us!

Jesus always went beneath the action to the motive, and tried to alter the direction of life by going to the source of inspiration. "Out of the abundance of the heart" he said, "the mouth speaketh".

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things". "Either make the tree good, and the fruit good: or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt". "Nothing that is from without a man can defile him, but from within". His whole work of religion was to deepen the idea of religion commonly held and make it a spirit and a life. He made a strong attack on the Pharisees for attending to the outside of the cup and the platter, but not the inside, and minding about external matters, mint and anise and cummin, but neglecting judgment and mercy and faith. A change from within was undoubtedly Jesus's whole striving. And when he taught the prayer, "Thy kingdom come", he meant it in the innermost heart, where God dwells, and where the motive which governs the action is decided.

Jesus is concerned with the inward disposition of the heart, since "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". His teaching, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things (your material needs) shall be added unto you", is entirely in keeping with the Kingdom of God is within you". It is an admonition to put the right value on the right things and mind about what matters most. The kingdom to seek is an inward state of loving service to God—in Job's expression, "treasuring up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food", or in Jesus's phrase, "laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven". Jesus cannot here be thinking of a kingdom which God is to bring in, but of a kingdom of the heart's own love and affections, which we are to seek for ourselves without waiting for tomorrow. Why, if Jesus had been thinking of a kingdom of the future, did he conclude by saying, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself"? This shaft seems directly aimed at eschatology. In the account in *Luke*, the instruction, "Seek ye the kingdom", is followed by the reassurance, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom". It will be given if only you seek it. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you". Or again, "Your Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him". The kingdom is within the divinity of the human spirit and is its possession now, if only realised.

Those parables in *Matthew* concerned with being ready for the kingdom when it came (the improvident virgins and the unready man who was not dressed for the wedding), take the common imagery of the kingdom and emphasise the worthlessness of merely hoping for it in the future, instead of living in it now. The parable of the talents teaches that we have been given them to use and not to leave lying idle because we fondly imagine the world is coming to an end. These parables point to action in the present on the assumption that life is going on as it is. Jesus, who was a poet, was employing the pictures in the mind of his hearers, and getting his point home; he

was not necessarily suggesting the literal truth of those pictures. "A man", writes Dean Inge, "who feels all heaven within him may use the language of his childhood about the gold and jewels of heaven's streets, but surely his faith is not childish or materialistic."

The soul came first, and the condition of earth came second, the individual first and society after, in Jesus's outlook. It is we, not he, who put a political and economic complexion upon the kingdom, and talk of it as if it were a Socialist Utopia. Jesus was concerned with the man living in society, not the society he lived in. Society might be hard or easy, just or unjust, but the matter of the moment was the inward state of the man himself. It does not follow that, because people are given greater chances, that they are going to make more of them. Character is not manufactured, but grown, and can only be changed by the supply inwardly of a new motive and goal.

Jesus was not bothered about economic reform and discountenanced political action. He never denounced war or slavery, he uttered no protest against long hours and low wages, high rent, burdensome interest or ruinous taxation; he said nothing political against Rome or the Herods. He just accepted these social arrangements, neither sanctioning nor condemning them. They find the most matter-of-fact mention in his parables. A king makes war on another king, a master orders his slaves about, labourers work a twelve-hour day under a gruelling sun for a penny, a man reprimands his slave for not putting his money out to interest, and Jesus never considers whether this social situation is right or wrong. On the burning question of taxation, Jesus was directly challenged to state his view. "Shall we give or not give?" He asked to see a coin, and when one was handed him, pointed to the Emperor's image and superscription upon it, saying: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's!" All Jesus minded about was getting people to mind about the things of God. The rest could take care of itself. It was a reform directed at the inward nature of the individual man and woman. Jesus told the parable of the rich man who died in the night, and drew the moral: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God". His whole attitude comes out in the subsequent comment: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Jesus could not have been less concerned with the hope of a new order of society, such as was envisaged by the contemporary view of the kingdom, and he could not have been more concerned about a revolution in conduct, arising in a new sense of the immediacy of God's kingdom. It does not necessarily follow that Jesus understood this immediacy in the same way as John the Baptist. He may have taken up John the Baptist's words and put his own meaning into them. He may have meant God's presence in the soul, which had come now, and only waited to be appropriated. Certainly his teaching of the kingdom was not the same as John the Baptist's. John was

like Amos, proclaiming the day of the Lord, or like Spurgeon, plucking the brand from the burning, frightening people into a form of goodness by the threat of a supernatural catastrophe, but Jesus had a deep conviction of God's intimate and near love. Jesus may have used the same words but in quite another sense. His kingdom was one which the love of God gave. It is all about us and within, and we are living in it, but our eyes are blinded and we cannot see. "Having eyes, see ye not; having ears, hear ye not?" he lamented.

When John the Baptist sent word asking whether he was the Messiah or not, Jesus's answer was that the blind were receiving their sight, the lame were learning to walk and the poor were having the gospel preached to them. This is no allusion to miracles, but figurative language in the sense of *Isaiah* xxxv. 5 and 6, and lxi. 1 to 3, from where also comes the Beatitude, "Blessed are ye that mourn, for ye shall be comforted". Jesus, after this description of the kingdom in another sense than John, contrasts his ministry with John's in a poetic and illustrative way: "Verily I say unto you, there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. The law and the prophets were until John, but from the day of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force", or in the version in *Luke*: "from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it". Obscure though this is, and capable of varying interpretation, it is clear that Jesus does not consider his view of the kingdom the same as John's, and is meaning that ever since John the Baptist's time the kingdom is open to entrance in a new way. There seems to have been a conflicting difference of opinion between John and Jesus as to how the kingdom would come and the kind of kingdom it would be,—whether outward and future, or inward and present. Jesus, with his deeper insight into the nature of God, passed beyond John, and saw how every man may have now, not in the future, the kingdom within, and said that anyone in possession of that kingdom was to be accounted greater even than John, who did not realise that he was in present possession of it.

When Jesus accused the formalistic Pharisees of shutting the kingdom of heaven against men while entering not in themselves, he meant that these custodians of religion insisted upon putting needless encumbrances on a first-hand and felt religion. They had no idea of such a religion in themselves and would not allow others to have it, but laid upon them burdens grievous to be borne,—all sorts of meticulous observances which had nothing to do with the inward character of the kingdom. *Luke's* corresponding version is, interestingly enough, "Ye took away the key of knowledge", and is probably interpreting Jesus's meaning to make it clear.

One text advanced for the eschatological view is the occasion when Jesus sends out his disciples on tour, and tells them that before they have gone through the cities of Israel the Son of Man will come.

Of this there is a companion saying that "there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom"; or, in the version of *Mark* "till they see the kingdom of God come with power". This is taken as sure proof by the eschatologists that Jesus started out with the confident expectation that God would inaugurate the new order and there was no time to be lost. The personalising of the saying to mean the Son of Man is likely to be an alteration by *Matthew* of *Mark*, so that leaves the saying "till the kingdom of God come with power". The expression "with power" is not kept by *Matthew* or *Luke*, and could be an addition, leaving the words, "till the kingdom come". That is the same as the prayer, "Thy kingdom come", and could bear the same connotation of a kingdom of the heart's repentance, brought about inwardly, and would be a word of encouragement to the disciples before they set out on their preaching tour. Perhaps this is putting on the text more than it will bear, but when the disciples return disappointed at their lack of success because they could not cast out the demons, Jesus says that they cannot hope to secure this kind of spiritual result without their making their own effort to overcome the demons inside them, and we may understand the demons as demons of hate and envy. "This kind", he said, "cometh not out but by prayer and fasting", and directed them inward. It was all a matter of sufficient faith; if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, which pushes up the earth, they could remove mountains.

This mention of the mustard seed is also made in the kingdom likenesses of *Matthew* xiii, where it is a parallel to the parable of the leaven. These passages of the sure and gradual growth of the mustard seed into a tree, from something so little to something so big, and of the leaven, itself so small a part of the whole, but which leavened the lump, indicate as they stand a picture of the kingdom as inward and present. God, when given a little possession of the human heart, will soon take possession of the whole if only He is allowed to. Then there is another couple of parallel sayings in the same chapter, where the kingdom of heaven is compared with treasure hid in a field, which, when a man has found, he just does not care about anything else in the world if only he can have it; and where it is compared with a pearl of great price, which, when the merchant, seeking goodly pearls, has found, he gladly gives up everything else in the world for it. That pearl and that treasure are the discovery in the heart of God's kingdom. To obtain it is to have as a personal possession an intimate and precious sense of the heavenly Father's love and care. Nothing else matters because it gives value to all things, and all things lose their value without it. It is that discovery which takes men into the ministry of Christ, and leads them to forsake the values of this world for the one value they mind most about. It is that discovery which no doubt sent Jesus out on his ministry, and led to his own people saying: "He is beside himself".

The eschatologists have a very mundane explanation of all this. Guignebert says that "if we approach these passages without any preconceived ideas, they only suggest the idea, that everything must be sacrificed to gain the kingdom, and that man must put himself by *metanoia* (repentance) into the right attitude to await the Great Day". Schweitzer says that the discovery of the precious pearl was the knowledge that the kingdom was coming, and selling all to obtain it was staking all upon the prospect it held out to him. Surely it is an unperceptive person indeed who must turn the pearl of great price into a betting stake on the kingdom. And Schweitzer says that the answer of Jesus to the rich young ruler, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God", means that he is near in time! Surely it is a more likely estimate of Jesus's person that it towers above the contemporary scene and its current beliefs than that he sinks and is submerged under its uninspired mediocrity.

The worst feature of eschatology is the ascription of interim-ethics to Jesus's teaching and way of life. "The ethics of Jesus", declares Schweitzer, "is conditional". "Service", he says, "is the fundamental law of interim-ethics", because it is "a training for rule in the kingdom". Even the sacrifice of his own life was made by Jesus, according to Schweitzer, with the kingdom in view, in order to bring it in. It sounds very much like a forcing of God's hand. Surely Jesus died, because he had to be true to all that he lived for, and stand for it. But Jesus's teaching and way of life, according to the interpretation of Schweitzer, holds good only for the time in between and is motivated by the consideration of prudence—a precursor of John Stuart Mill's utilitarian philosophy!

Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is the religious conviction of Jesus which gives power to his ethics. The reason for being brotherly, perfect to others as God to us, is not even because it is our brother, but because he is also a son, whose welfare is the concern of God. Countless crimes against humanity have been committed by those who have lost sight of the Fatherhood, and considered Man in the social mass, instead of as an individual, made in God's image, partaking of the divine nature and destined for immortal life. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is speaking of the rule of God in the kingdom of men's hearts and the law of love which obtains there. That kingdom, in Jesus's view, has come, and everyone who wills may enter it now, the only requisite being the readiness to "receive it as a little child". The kingdom, he taught, has come already (*ephthasen*) and it is no use waiting for it, because it is here, in and among you, within you. "The kingdom of God", says Harnack, "is, of its very nature, a spiritual reality, a force which permeates and can only be grasped by the heart".

An indication of the difficulty Jesus must have had in his teaching of a present and spiritual kingdom is afforded by the story of James and John. After all he had said to them, they asked him: "Master, may we have chief places in the kingdom, on thy right

hand and left?" The other disciples were righteously indignant, but Jesus called them to him, and told them all that service is the badge of greatness and they should not be ambitious for place like the great ones of the earth, who lord it over others. Jesus is rebuking them, and pointing to the implications of the kingdom within, but Schweitzer and others appear no more to understand him than James and John, since they adduce this very scene as a proof of how Jesus was expecting the kingdom to come in Jerusalem in the next day or so!

We must disentangle Apocalyptic from Jesus's utterances, and realise that it has crept into the account. The amazing thing is that his words appear to have been remembered and kept even when they cannot have been wholly understood, and remain recorded like the kernel in the husk. Jesus was profoundly greater than his time. He was not only the product of his generation but an original thinker and moulder of thought, who left his influence upon his generation. His original contribution lay precisely in his revolutionary idea of the kingdom as inward and present, involving a way of life, which had nothing to do with a miraculous transformation in the future, but with the presence of God in the heart now. It is easy to see that his own ideas of the kingdom would be mixed with his audience's in any account of his ministry. It would take too long here to go into a textual exposition of the stratification theory. It is enough to say that the disciples and friends of Jesus, after his death, must have had to do a lot of explaining to themselves why this had happened, and had recourse to the passage in *Daniel* about the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. But this is their idea, not his. The religion of Christianity was rooted far too deeply in the soil of the Old Testament heritage, and grounded too firmly in the truth of Jesus's own life and teaching, to be affected by the delay of the *parousia* (Second Coming). The abandonment of that expectation did not make the slightest difference to what was really valuable in Christ's person and Christianity.

Eschatology clouds that value. It hides what is really great in Jesus. It takes away the man from us. It removes the religion and leaves only the ethic of the in-between time. It is a direct contradiction for Schweitzer to say that "Jesus as a concrete and historical personality remains a stranger to our time, but his spirit, which lies hidden in his words, is known in simplicity, and its influence is direct". A man and his words cannot be separated in this arbitrary fashion. Words are the bridge between two minds, and connect one with the other. Jesus is knowable to our age and his teaching valid for all time, because he is a teacher of government by love in the kingdom of God within, and makes an eternal appeal to all that is best and finest in human nature—the God in us also—because his are "the words of eternal life" and his "the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world".

More about "The Fourth Mysticism"

JOHN REDWOOD ANDERSON

IF one is to discuss Mysticism, it is very important, I think, to start by defining what one means by 'Mysticism,' or what one does *not* mean by it. To define it as 'the search for God' (I have even come across the definition 'being in love with God') is far too narrow. It covers no more than the main stream of Christian mysticism, that of the Sufis, and that of the Bakhti, or devotional, types of Indian mysticism. It leaves out the great tradition of classical Indian mysticism—that, principally, of the Advaita Vedânta, one of the most important schools of Indian thought—for which the Supreme is not God (Ishvara) in any sense, but the impersonal Brahman. Complete loss of the self in Brahman, loss without any possibility of return, and so without any possibility of communication to men, is the goal of this type of mysticism. The whole idea of the love of God—the mutual love of God and man—is alien to it, or, where admitted, is regarded as a lower type of mystical goal and one which, in the last resort, is illusory: since Ishvara, the personal God, is as much the effect of Mâyâ, or of Avidyâ (nescience), as is the human soul itself regarded as an individual and separate entity. Against this radical Pantheism, which, from a religious point of view, is also a radical Atheism, Indian thought has again and again rebelled, and it is from this rebellion that most, if not all, the forms of Bakhti religion have sprung. Chief among these forms is the great rival school of the Vedânta, the school connected with the name of Ramanuja.

I believe that the mystical impulse originates in man's dissatisfaction, not with this or that finite form of existence, but with finite existence itself. Its motive power is the urge to transcend this finitude—not to lose the finite in the Infinite, for that would be the extinction of the finite itself, the annihilation of the human soul. Rather does it seek the hypostatic union of the finite with the Infinite, of God with man, which is the theological solution of the problem of the 'two natures of Christ'. But the finite may attempt to escape from its finitude, from its solitariness, *downwards* as well as upwards: it may strive after self-loss (using 'self' in a narrow sense) by seeking union with Nature, or rather with the daemonic powers in Nature. This seems to be the aim of all orgiastic cults and is, if I mistake not, included as one form of mystical endeavour by Berdyaev in his *Meaning of History*. Nor are we altogether without present-day examples of this orgiastic mysticism. Fascism, especially as developed in Nazi Germany, and Russian Communism, are such examples: both at their best (and worst!) are forms of 'enthusiastic' religion. But in these modern examples it is the State or the People, and no

longer Nature, that provides that 'larger self' in union with which the individual self seeks its transcendence and its escape from its own solitude. There can be little doubt that it is the need for such self-transcendence, such self-mergence, and its partial satisfaction that, apart from all economics, gives the real motive power to these political idealogies. Orgiastic mysticism, too, has often been associated with cruelty and violence (as in the self-mutilation of the votaries of Cybele, and the ceremony of tearing the victim to pieces in the rites of Dionysus). I need hardly say that the kind of orgiastic mysticism which forms an integral part of my fourth type of mysticism has no relation to any of these examples, ancient or modern. 'The Fourth Mysticism' rather implies a search for and a finding of the Infinite in the finite, or, better, perhaps, the recognition of the infinite significance and value of the finite itself. This concept of mine is completely opposed to the whole attitude of mind embodied and extolled in the following saying of Thomas à Kempis: 'To despise the creature in order to find out the Creator'. (How can that saying be reconciled with 'If a man love not his neighbour whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?') No! One must rather taste God in the flesh of a ripe apple—and that, *not* sacramentally. Not, that is, by looking upon the apple as merely the outward sign and of little or no value in the absence of its accompanying spiritual grace; the apple is something in its own right, but it is also something more—something more, but also something in its own right. That is what I mean by saying that our search for God must be in two directions simultaneously: upwards and downwards, inwards and outwards: to grasp the Whole in the Part and the Part in the Whole; no longer to leave the things of Earth for the things of Heaven, but to find Heaven embodied in Earth, and Earth saturated by Heaven. There is something all wrong in giving a cup of water to a beggar 'for Christ's sake'; only when it is given for the beggar's sake is it truly received 'by Christ'. Only when our charity ignores God will God accept that charity. This is the whole gist of my 'Fourth Mysticism': the denial of the opposition—and, above all, of the necessary antagonism—between the sacred and the profane. The sacred and the profane are not two kinds or levels of existence, not two worlds, the one above the other, so that to seek the first we must abandon—yes, even 'despise'—the second; but two ways of conceiving, of feeling towards, and of living in, one and the same world. This one world can be seen from the point of view of the isolated part, in which case it is 'profane', and also from the point of view of the integrated Whole, in which case it is 'sacred'. Even St. Douceline, for whom the song of the bird led her thoughts to God, was not wholly right: for she still ignored the song of the bird *as such*. It is this radical separation of God and the World that I oppose. There is such a separation, but it can be, and has been, so exaggerated and so insisted upon that it has led to the denial—or, at the very least, to the neglect—of the opposite and equal truth of the

unity of God and the World. Truly, He is *in* the world and the World knows Him not!

For me, God is, above all else, the Sum-Total of Experience, irrespective of the apparent good or bad of that experience, or of its apparent importance or triviality. This is what I mean when I speak of the Divine Experience as an 'orchestral experience', and as a 'One-Many'; for, if I borrow this term from Plotinus, it is with an altogether different connotation. 'Omniscience' is not enough. It is not enough that God should 'know' the experience of the finite 'creatures' that, in their indefinitely vast numbers, make up the World: should 'know' your experience and mine, the experience of the archangel Gabriel (if such a being exists) and the experience of the black beetle, the experience of the plant, and of the very molecules, atoms, electrons, that compose the substance of the solid earth, the experience of the sun and of the stars. For if He did no more than know them, however perfect that knowledge, they would still be the experiences of *others*, not his Own. For His experience to be a real Whole, a real Sum-Total, He must *share identically* the myriad experiences of all the creatures—they must be His own experiences, as well as each the experience of some one of the creatures. He must experience *as*, and not merely *in*, the creatures. Where the experience of any one creature excludes that of all other creatures—and *a fortiori* the Divine experience itself—the experience of God includes that of all the creatures: includes it *as*, at one and the same time, the experience of the creature and His own. Behind the difference between God and the World, which difference is all that we normally can know or even imagine, there is a secret identity. Therefore is the Divine Consciousness not that of a One over against the Many of the World, not that of any one of the Many, nor that of all the Many together, but of a One-Many. The idea of Identity in Difference and Difference in Identity is at the root of any understanding of the World, and, indeed, at the root of all mysticism. We go wrong whenever we exalt the Difference above the Identity: this is the fatal error of nine-tenths of Christian, or any Theistic, thinking. Equally we go wrong whenever we exalt the Identity above the Difference: this is the fatal error of the thought of the most profound and logical school of Indian philosophy, that of the Vedānta as interpreted by its greatest exponent, Shankara. And we go wrong precisely because the mind cannot grasp the idea of Identity in Difference and of Difference in Identity (for it is a double problem) in any logical form. Once again, life—and particularly spiritual life—transcends our logic. For me, this is the whole essence of mysticism: to realize—not as an intellectual proposition, for this is impossible, and, were it possible, would be merely an intellectual, and not a mystical, experience—to realize not as an intellectual proposition, but as a living spiritual *fact*, the Identity in and through the Difference; and for this the Difference is as necessary and as fundamental as the Identity. For this Identity is no mere self-

identity, and 'one is one' or 'the cat is the cat'; but an identity in difference. So, for me, man can never 'lose himself in God' in the sense that he ceases to be, in some sense, man; for this by annihilating the difference would simultaneously annihilate the identity. If love depends upon, and points to, this inner identity between the two who love, it no less depends upon their very difference.

Here I must interrupt and explain myself, otherwise you might well misunderstand me. I have used the word 'creature' in a conventional and somewhat loose sense, for I do not believe either in 'creature' or 'Creator'. God does not 'create' the World. He becomes the World while yet remaining God. Or, if you will—for it comes to much the same thing—He summons the World into being from out the depths of His own Divine Fecundity, His own Nature: that Nature of which He is the unique, all-comprehensive, and eternal Form or Person, and which *as capacity* nevertheless infinitely exceeds Him *as actuality*. He becomes the World: otherwise the difference between God and the World would be an absolute difference, and God the 'totally other' of such writers as Karl Barth; and this would mean that, on one hand, there was no divine principle in man, and, on the other, that though God might *know* the experience of the creature—of the finite centre of consciousness—He could not share it identically in the manner I have before described, and so His experience would be no more than that of one, though a supreme One, among and over against the Many. It would not be that Totality of experience implied in the idea of the One-Many, and we should be back on the level of ordinary thought, the thinking which is natural, and indeed inevitable, to our normal 'Sensible World', when, as a matter of fact, we are trying to apprehend the thinking (if 'thinking' it can still be called) of the 'Intelligible World'. And secondly, when I spoke of 'the Universe experiencing itself', I could as well have said, 'God experiencing Himself in and as the Universe.' 'In and as'! For us in our normal consciousness there is only an 'I-and-Thou' relation between man and God, as there is between man and man; for God there is not only this 'I-and-Thou' relation but also and beyond that an 'I-Thou' relation. This is not what Christians call the Divine Immanence; for immanence implies only a difference between the immanent principle and that in which it is immanent—nothing can be 'immanent' in itself—that is, in normal religious thinking, between God and man. What I am envisaging here is something much closer than any immanence—an *identity* in, and in spite of, the difference. But the difference still exists, otherwise we should have pure Pantheism; and in so far as it exists, just in so far can God be held to be immanent in the World. Can I put it that God in His 'I-Thou' relation to the World is not immanent, but that in His 'I-and-Thou' relation He is? In a word, Identity in Difference does not preclude immanence, but it is not the same thing. And now to one last point, which is difficult to make in a short space.

Recently I was discussing my concept of 'the Fourth Mysticism' with a friend, and during the discussion my friend spoke of 'going through the experience of the One-Many to that of the One-Alone.' Now there is a sense in which I can agree that this 'going through' can and does take place; but there is another sense in which such a phrase can have, for me, no meaning at all. If my friend meant that, beyond what I have called the 'orchestral consciousness' of God, beyond God's experience in and as the World, beyond that Totality which is the One-Many, there yet remains God's experience of Himself in His own solitariness 'before all worlds', and that man can, so to speak, penetrate even to this, then I can agree both as to the possibility of such a passage 'through' the One-Many and as to the fact of this realization. God in His solitariness, regarded as unrelated to the World, in His eternal being, as it is unaffected by the existence or non-existence of any Universe, is what Whitehead curiously calls the 'Primordial Nature of God', as distinguished from the 'Consequent Nature of God', that is, God in relation to, and involved in, any existing Universe. God as 'Primordial' is eternal being; God as 'Consequent' has, in addition to this eternal being, a temporal existence: as Primordial, He knows no succession; as Consequent, all succession is included in His eternity. I believe that man may reach that 'Primordial Nature' and, in so doing, can share that eternal being and eternal stillness, if only for the brief instant that such an experience endures. If this is what my friend means by the One-Alone, I can accept it. But both in His Primordial and Consequent Natures this is still one and the same God—this is still what Inge calls 'the God of religion'—*and it is not the Absolute*. Now, I believe that, philosophically, at any rate, the One-Alone of Plotinus, derived as it is from the 'Change-less One' of Parmenides and the Eleatics, stands in his system, not for the 'God of religion', but for what modern philosophers call the Absolute, the Brahman of the Advaita Vedānta. And just as the Vedāntins, quoting the Upanishads, say 'Neti! Neti!'—'Not this! Not that!'—so Plotinus says of the One-Alone 'οὐκ ἔστι'—'It does not exist'. This Absolute is not the 'subject' of any experience, whether that subject be God, or man, or anything else. It is pure element of awareness in, the pure subjectivity of, all subjects alike. As Eckhart says: 'Essence is the same in God and creatures'. It is the Ground both of God, the unique all-inclusive subject of the total World-Experience (and also the Subject of the eternal self-knowledge of God in His Primordial Nature) and of the myriad hosts of all the mutually-exclusive subjects of finite experience. This is what Boehme and, after him, Berdyaev, mean by 'Ungrund', and I may refer you to the latter's *Meaning of History* (pp. 54 ff.) for his strange and significant exposition of it. To speak of 'union' with this Absolute is to say nothing, for every conscious being in the Universe *is* this Absolute, *is* a personalized form of this fundamental impersonal awareness. This Absolute appears, on one hand, eternally as the Personal God,

Himself a Trinity in Unity (though by no means the orthodox one), and, on the other hand, as the World; and this Absolute stands to both God and the World not as superior, but as potentiality to actuality: a potentiality eternally actualized in God, and through God, 'through him all things came into being'—a better translation of the Greek πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο than 'by him all things were made'—through God temporarily as the World. To lose oneself in this Absolute (and this is the goal of classical Indian mysticism) would be, were it possible, not only to lose oneself by self-annihilation, but, far from finding Him, to lose God also. In this sense, then, the passage to the One-Alone can have no meaning for me.

And now, as I close, let me come back once again to what is the essence of my 'Fourth Mysticism.' It is to walk in this world not as an exile from Heaven, not as an alien, not as through a Vale of Tears, nor even as through a Vale of Soul-making, but as Adam walked with God in the cool of the evening, as already, in part, in Paradise regained. It is to see 'every common bush afire with God', and yet to see it still as a common bush in its own right and dignity. It is to know the things of the Earth neither as mere things of the Earth, nor as signs and symbols of the things of Heaven, but as already themselves partial presentations of the things of Heaven. It is to move in two contrary directions at once; to absorb life, to plunge into its multiplicity and chaotic wealth—this is the Dionysian impulse—and it is at the same time to abstract oneself from all things in the thought and presence of God—this is the Apollonian impulse. Neither without the other is complete, nor, in the last resort, sane. It is to reverse the terrible and blasphemous injunction of à Kempis: for I know that by the very measure with which I 'despise' any single 'creature', by that same measure shall I fail to 'find out' the 'Creator'. It is to substitute for the *Via Negativa* of classical Christian mysticism a new *Via Positiva*, the way of acceptance and not the way of rejection. It is to see and recognize the Infinite in the finite, and yet to see and recognize the inalienable right and dignity of the finite itself, and in and for itself. It is to see and acknowledge the intrinsic value of each moment of time, and yet to see all time's moments subsumed in an eternal value. It is to see every living thing—and I place no limit to 'life'—as having its own end in itself, and yet to see all things as means to some supreme end, organs in the total organism of God. It is a love of God which does not deny the love of the World; it is a 'cosmic enthusiasm' which yet does not deny the 'enthusiasm' for God: a motion inwards and outwards, downwards and upwards, an immersion in the World and an escape from the World—and all this simultaneously: a finding of God in the World and of the World in God—the spiritual perception of the Identity within and behind all Difference, with yet no loss of the Difference in the Identity. It is to see this world no longer as the forecourt of Heaven, but, in Leibniz's phrase, as the

'confused perception' of Heaven itself; and that, without any denial or minimizing of its sorrow and sin and apparently immedicable evil, for in the Divine Light these wear no longer their familiar aspects but appear somehow transformed and, as it were, redeemed.

It may seem to the reader that the above is little more than a restatement and echo of what many Christian mystics have said; but if he will look closer, he will see, I think, that it is far from being such. For it recognizes something that no Christian mystic ever recognized: the appreciation of, and indeed the passionate attachment to, the things of this world *for their own sakes*: for their own sakes, but not for their own sakes alone. It is this double reference to God and to the World simultaneously that, I believe, marks this fourth type of mysticism off very clearly from all other recognized types—this admission of Dionysus not in opposition to, but in conjunction with, Apollo. And I further believe that this fourth type of mysticism is the only one consonant with and fitted to our life in the world today. For we can no longer abandon the world, nor treat it as of secondary importance, nor as a mere means to an end. Today we are all, and in so far, Humanists; and it is only by taking the world and the values of the things of the world up into our religious thought and mystical practice that we can justify them; for only by the incarnation of religion in life can life be lifted up into religion.

Planning for Progressive Religion

RUDOLPH BOEKE

REAL religious life can never be static, but must be dynamic, moving and changing both men and the community in their thoughts and practice.

It seems as if church life goes on in institutions according to established creeds and settled habits, based on historical facts; that the framework of theology which gives strength to this official and public service remains the same through the ages; and that the world of religion lifted above time and space does not follow the shifting of the earthly scene. But this illusion—that we are living in a kind of lofty ecclesiastical structure, separate from the reality of modern culture and society, in some sort of pious pattern which never alters—should be abandoned.

We are involved in a struggle between holy and demonic powers. We are caught up in a current which carries us from the past to the future. We are parts of an immense spiritual body which has to grow through the depths of consciousness and the sense of mutual responsibility. We should not let things as they are stand and decay; we should alter them so that they can fit the immense and new tasks which are awaiting us.

Therefore the need of *planning* in the domain of religion is urgent. We should not let developments overtake us in a haphazard way as the whimsical result of Fate. It is not consonant with the high calling of Christianity to waste precious possibilities. As men who are seeking a modern way for eternal truth and essential fulfilment we are obliged to rethink our methods and work for a more fundamental realisation of our high commission.

To this purpose it is necessary that we

- (1) consider the present situation in which we are, in the field of our Western theology and religious organisations;
- (2) compare their response to this challenge with the way in which various branches of science and other forms of civilization meet the changes with which they are confronted;
- (3) see the dangers and difficulties of planning in religious life;
- (4) try to give some principal starting-points for a way of renovation;
- (5) discover our main theological perspectives;
- (6) work out a spiritual strategy in church-life; and
- (7) accept the practical consequences of viewpoints.

Now for some further remarks on each of these points.

(1) *The present situation* in western Europe and the United States is so complicated that there is hardly anyone, whether great theologian or outstanding church leader who can grasp all its tendencies and changes. Certainly we have deep respect for the Barths and Brunners, the Niebuhrs and Niemöllers. But we too can put great spirits beside them, Tillich and Nigg, Buber and Ziegler; and every reader will be able to mention other figures who have had a definite influence on the shaping of his religious convictions and attitude to life. Thus the total outlook in theological faculties and church councils has become so contradictory and confused that it is almost impossible to achieve a true survey, or to avoid idle striving in action.

Let us, for example, consider *the Netherlands*. A great social expansion after the war, the building of new cities and the reclaiming of new polders, the intensification of traffic, all have their counterpart in the many diverse activities of the churches. There is a variety of ecclesiastical organisations, societies, standpoints. Often there is duplication of the work done by people who in Christian principles are very much akin. There is a tendency to build up greater units, to replace local pastors by area leaders, regional or national. The Protestant denominations have adopted new church orders in which emphasis is laid on the one hand upon pastoral care and on the other hand upon the duty to bring the gospel to those outside the church. These ideals are competing for predominance. People with High Church sympathies try to develop their influence, and latitudinarian currents hope to broaden the minds of men. In newspapers, radio and television, the main orthodox and liberal groups are

propagating their word and way of life. And in central offices, authorities of greater or lesser importance are developing along widely divergent lines. There is a great need for modern theologians who will judge and serve independently, in view of the inclination towards *conformity* which permeates the general atmosphere. If a theology or a policy is accepted officially, it has a better chance of becoming popular or of receiving grants from the Treasury; and these aids which civil authorities are giving for such activities as religious education and church building are not unimportant. But it is difficult for municipal councils or the State to come to a fair and objective judgment when so many churches and religious organisations are claiming rights and public acknowledgement. There is, of course, the Oecumenical Movement in Holland, but besides the national Council of Churches, with its credal basis, stand Free Protestants in the I.A.R.F. and Neo-Calvinists in the I.C.C.

When tensions and divergences are already so evident in one small country, how much more urgent is the situation in larger areas like the British Commonwealth or North America. We hear and read about lack of ministers in England on the one hand and about a growing interest in church life in the U.S.A. on the other. A general intensification is taking place, we are informed, not only in psychological and sociological respects, but in the field of theology as well. The longing for a renewed vision over the whole field of Christian endeavour is becoming more vivid. In the congregations the right harmony between parish meetings and missionary undertakings is being sought. In several regions the problem of how to integrate Christians of different race and social background is acute. At the national level the question of fusion of churches or intercommunion is being actively discussed.

So in smaller as well as in larger fields the need for planning, to bring some order into a tangled situation, grows ever more pressing as we seek to avoid futile and mutually frustrating efforts.

(2) *A comparison with business methods* in modern civilisation shows how everywhere the necessity for planning has been felt and is being met by teams or persons who are working specially for this purpose. (a) Every great *industrial undertaking* has its directors who are looking forward to approaching opportunities and dangers. They employ managers who handle problems as they arise. They have their experienced men who direct the general trend of production and trade, who control the quality of materials and personnel, who are responsible for right human relations and the future development of the company. This is not merely the case with private concerns; where technical and economic affairs affect a county, a province or a state, there also planning agencies are publicly constituted. These all work effectively in this industrialised world. What would have become of destroyed Rotterdam without a commission steadily working to re-plan the city? So also the whole ground plan of our religious life can become a subject for revision.

(b) We see the same in the *social and political services*. Often the information and direction of social services in city and country is much better than that of the church in its care for those who are in need. True, there is a church centre for sociological advice in Holland, and there are many church committees and organisations for the socially maladjusted and handicapped. But in this respect secular social workers and political leaders (when they are not Roman Catholic) are usually supported in their work by general inspectors and representatives of official departments, who lay down their main objectives and to whom they look for help in emergencies. But success in church government and applied theology depends all too often upon quite accidental factors and the chance possession of talents by a few gifted individuals, rather than upon planning, foresight and co-operation.

It is remarkable that at the very time when in America the concept of the 'brain trust' and in Scotland the concept of the 'church moderator' is accepted as a matter of course, when in Russia the Five Year Plan was looked upon as an inevitable means of improving the general level of life, and when the United Nations depends on a permanent headquarters and secretariat, Protestant theological and ecclesiastical leaders are coming only with reluctance to study the principles of planning.

(c) In *modern science* too, many endeavours are concentrated upon research into structures and their changes. In biology, physics and psychology students accept it as a natural thing to co-operate in teamwork based on agreed schemes and hypotheses. They have their laboratories in which experiments are made, not only to prove existing facts, but much more to discover new necessities and new domains for energy and creative life.

One of the fundamental issues nowadays is not merely how to use nuclear energy, but also how to face the consequences which this release of hidden force has on the most essential forms and structure of life and spirit. For instance, amphibians which are found in the neighbourhood of an atomic centre may suddenly show changes in their constitution, acquiring a new appearance and additional limbs. This fact points to an induced change of basic importance which demands co-operative study, and not only studies by students of natural science. The order of creation is at stake.

Psychology makes a similar challenge when it puts forward as a cardinal thesis that the soul of man is 'intentional' in character, that it is directed towards a goal, which has to be faced in spite of frustrations and complex difficulties. The whole of personal life cannot simply be divided into definite phases, following one another as a constant development; rather the changes from one stage into the next become in themselves objects of interest. And the purpose of a disturbed and troubled mind is to become reintegrated, to find anew the living order and equilibrium of practical possibilities and a spiritual task.

So in the inward as well as in the outward life of modern culture it is clear that planning is both inevitable and helpful; it avoids much idle muddling and the heavy losses which can be caused by a contradictory handling of the complicated human problems which have to be solved. Should not the same approach promote the realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth by the service of the Church, and bring order and efficiency into the arbitrary efforts of theological workers whether in one country or in a continent?

(3) One must not, however, ignore the fact that there are many liberals who are inclined to deny the value of planning. They would emphasise certain *dangers and difficulties* in any kind of planning.

(a) First they would warn us against a *preponderance of direction*. Our world is already over-organised, they say, and religion or spiritual life can never be managed as a business affair. The Spirit blows like the wind and man cannot canalise its creative power and reforming work. (But so far as we acknowledge the historical and human means of its revelation and realisation, some defined course must be charted through our practical and theoretical conclusions. Steering is better than just floating.)

(b) Others think it pretentious to plan the future. According to them we mortal creatures can only *live in the moment*, the *kairos* of the here and now. How should an eschatological view be realized at this time? We would live as if we were concerned with a *theologia gloriæ* instead of with a *theologia crucis*; as if it were too arrogantly presumptuous to grasp after such loftiness, and to think about a level on which we have not arrived as yet. But to accept responsibility for the consequences of the seeds we are sowing now and for the measures we take to satisfy our actual needs, is no *hubris*. If we think it a sound principle to take out life insurance or to make investments to preserve material and human treasures which are entrusted to us, is it wrong to make arrangements for future spiritual events and coming divine opportunities?

(c) A third objection must be recognised: will not planning bring with it the *danger of generalization*? Will not things be handled too collectively? It is attractive to work mainly according to abstract schemes, in an impersonal, even anonymous way. The individual soul and its unique inspiration, the spontaneous reaction and unexpected progression might be neutralised and shut out. A team of a few 'bright boys' might so astutely arrange things, ruling so smoothly and nicely, that it could be accepted as something for and from everyone; whereas in fact it would not take account of possible diverging views and individual contributions. Nor, indeed should we like a merely oligarchic experimentation, without the guidance and advice of helpful co-operative effort. A group of free and independent religious thinkers who want to serve the same purpose can do much to arrange an appropriate atmosphere and to bring right workers to the right places, to avoid the confusion and frustration which might result from a purely particularistic zeal.

(4) We must also find some *principal points to start from* and explore the possibilities of justifiably improving our theological and ecclesiastical efforts.

(a) The *history of religion* shows that man always has tried to discover traces of the divine Order. The art of discerning these traces, and of arriving at the decisions which mortals should take according to Providence, was exercised in earlier times by the technique of divination. To the general use of this method in antiquity and its importance for Christianity the author has drawn attention in his thesis, *Divinatie met name bij Rudolf Otto* (Leeuwarden, 1957, published for Leyden University.) It is shown there how past religious experience has had its shaping influence, either by its adoption or by reaction against it, on each new religion which follows it. Thus Canaanite pagan trends are found in the manners of early Israel. Christianity must own to its origin in the Holy Land and to the fact that it is shaped by its typical features in its later development. Islam is built on Jewish and Christian data, and for its further elaboration it continues to be conditioned by these elements working in it.

Of course nobody can tell how the meeting of the world religions will evolve in the next century. It would be culpable *laissez-faire*, simply to let things develop without guidance; missionary enterprises should not be left to progress aimlessly, without regard to other religions or to the common field of action, which is nothing less than mankind in all its needs. Therefore in the World Congress of Faiths an attempt is made to build at least a forum at which the leaders can speak with one another; and the I.A.R.F. organises a conference in Chicago in 1958 to bring some planning to bear on the great difficulties and problems with which the different religions are confronted in this rapidly changing world.

(b) The *Bible* too provides many features and challenges to reflection for men of daring faith and liberated conscience in entering upon common tasks in the future. The God of the Old and New Testament is not so much a God of the past, of a salvation which happened once for all, as a living and guiding Majesty, a God who is working to fulfil his glorious purpose in an obstinate world. The Prophets announce his amazing intentions for his people; and much of the people's happiness or distress depends upon the readiness of the faithful to accept his decision and to estimate what will be the consequences for their own life and that of the whole congregation. The Apostles also started upon their mission in response to the call of Christ. Certainly they responded to sudden inspirations and mandates of the Holy Spirit. Peter goes to Cornelius, and Paul answers a voice which says, 'Come over'; though both men were hardly ready for such emergency calls. But Paul also made his arrangements to go as far afield as Corinth and Rome; and the Council of Apostles in Jerusalem (*Acts* 15) drew the main lines, along which outsiders could be brought into 'the holy community'. Yes, even

the Apocalypse has inflamed some spirits with its announcements of the great Consummation. Here we see exactly the difference between those who follow these statements as being literal predictions and thus bind themselves to special terms in a mentality of alarm, and those who answer these visions of the great judgment and liberation of the friends of Christ with sober and concrete short term response designed to fit the short period of life in this world which they assume is all that is left to them. The latter are living by an eschatological expectation, but realise their commission by a careful estimation of their ethical position.

(c) Thus we find points of support in *modern religious ethics* for what we want to say. In recent years in the Church and in the universities attention has been drawn to social ethics. For example, the Evangelical Church of Württemberg, in Germany, answering the reports of the Evanston Conference of the World Council of Churches, asked for a kind of collective Christian ethos which fully recognized personal responsibility to God, and also the fact that his work on earth is determined by certain structural laws and specific group-forms. The oecumenical Secretary of the Netherlands, Dr. Golterman, who recently reported this question, asked rightly : 'Is it not time now that the Church should take more seriously its concern for the mass of mankind and see where its special task lies in this connection? It is the duty of the theological faculties to tackle this problem.' In seeking a solution we must be careful to think at first not in sociological, but rather in religious terms. We should remain aware of the specific difficulty of applying structural laws to spiritual dilemmas. But an attempt at a solution must be made.

(d) Does not the *philosophy of religion* point in the same direction? When, in existentialist books, it is said that existence is a project which has to be realised—that to live means an unavoidable assignment of the human being to a situation from which there is no escape—then man is fundamentally interested in a project leading to radical developments and changes.

And when we think about truth and value of religion for the future, we do well to acknowledge the many irrational agents which are working for (and against) its victory; but yet we are prompted to present their power in a rational form. We cannot just wait until that eternal truth and value prevails by a supernatural intervention, but we have to make use of our mind for the cultivation of logic and must be attentive to the refining of our consciences. Spontaneous and incalculable factors should be brought into a clear and strong relation with one another. We need a planned forward movement, avoiding the dry and deadly regimentation that extinguishes original thought. And each step forward must justify itself on the living quick of personal experience.

(5) So we can discover important *theological perspectives* and unfold typical implications of a renewed liberal Christian activity.

What we need is an elucidation of *the movement which is going on*

at present and of any future changes which are to be expected in the patterns of theological thought and religious relations. Thus far we have been handling them as immovable branches of a settled plant. We are now eager to discover statistical information about facts and phenomena. We would expose the texts, the history, the habits, the architecture of the revealed Word of God, and try to defend them against doubt and attacks. But we should consider revelation as an amazing claim of the Spirit which rises before us with astonishing power and raises radical questions, sanctifying old certainties and creating new ones. We should take seriously the shifting of spiritual structures, not keep them as eternal traditions.

Encyclopaedic propaedeutics of religion will then be not merely an embracing survey of material and sources, of official functions and factual problems; they will show the dynamics of intertwined and complicated life in different fields of study. The different currents in religious development should be given their right place. The interrelation of enterprises undertaken by theological workers ought to be defined and their mutual influence analysed; and the ways in which the literature seeks to arrive at a synthesis should be judged by its usefulness within the framework of a balanced whole.

To this end we have to seek new forms of expression and exposition of religious experience. Theological terminology should be adapted to the tasks which now confront us. *A new language*, more adequate symbols, have to be found. (At the Royal Academy of Sciences in the Netherlands, Professor Freudenthal has spoken about a design for a new language on a mathematical basis by which it may be possible to get into contact with beings from other worlds in our universe.)

So we need research into fundamentals, for the better understanding and reconstruction of theological investigation and education. Is the scientific method applicable to the depths of spiritual reality, or should we have recourse to other ways of approach? A revision of our hermeneutical principles seems to be important. Even the traditional concerns of historical and dogmatic theology could be brought into the searching light of modern criticism.

The object of *Church History* would not be mainly to bring together material from the past, but rather to provide a starting point for a better planned movement towards the future. The accent should not be exclusively laid upon the life and work of great men and institutions of earlier times. It may rather become more important to draw attention to comparative symbolics. Much of the work which is done in oecumenical centres for theological study goes in this direction, in an attempt to see the progress of the churches through all their phases and diversities to a goal of greater unity. Only, this ought not to be a restricted, but rather an inclusive and patient reconnaissance, which does not exclude certain viewpoints such as the Unitarian point of view.

As for *dogmatics*, the scholar has not to be content with an

explication of dogmas, with a presentation of steadfast given truths. We are not ready, if all we have is a discipline expounding a substratum of facts which are sacred and decisions which are irrevocable. Rather we have to fight for new forms to express our faith, for pioneering declarations which announce the Kingdom of God, to concentrate upon the consequences of the daybreak, the outcome of the triumph of a living Christ.

(6) These theological principles can be worked out in a *spiritual strategy in the life of the churches* which is much more than the yearly 'reviews of arms' held by synods, and the daily tactics of ecclesiastical secretaries. To be sure, the officers, the specialist advisers, the pastors for general and field service, do important work. But behind and in front of these practical workers a planning staff can be helpful. New committees for reorganisation will always be needed, as will enquiries among ministers and church members, the re-education of adults, and parish building. Nowadays we are not properly prepared when we organise oecumenical camps and inter-church aid, when we start big missionary and evangelisation campaigns. All this is helpful and often accomplished by great zeal and effort. But the task is not fulfilled by proclaiming general truths or special messages, by co-ordinating many well known strivings and bringing together masses of people. It is more urgent to promote a new strategy by a small team which leads the way and makes a thorough exploration of the place and function which the spiritual Body and Brotherhood will occupy in the near future.

An open heart for divine guidance, a readiness to sacrifice purely private activities and a broad outlook over church and world are necessary conditions for such responsible considerations. This should be worked out on both a small and a large scale: regionally, nationally, internationally, always keeping in mind that there is a difference between work in the actual situation of the parishes and in sociology of religion.

In the northern region of the Netherlands, Friesland, an investigation was recently made into the condition of the 'free reformed' congregations. As a result a report can be made, based on factual findings, concerning financial and confessional difficulties, about pastoral needs, the participation in clubs and services, and so on. More necessary, however, is a thorough and concrete planning for the whole liberal movement in that part of the Netherlands. To this end a sociography of the counties in question could be helpful; but we require more than description only. The normative picture has to be developed. The great lines must be drawn along which the impact of God's promises upon the perplexities of the parishes can become fruitful.

(7) All these considerations ask for a *practical approach* to a manifold task. Much can be done here in the free countries and circles where a progressive spirit is alive. Among liberal leaders in England, in modern theological faculties and denominational

centres in the United States of America, and in Western Europe, a deeper investigation and consultation would be welcome. Also the university libraries could be brought into a better condition to meet the needs of the future. They could be helped to choose the literature which is indispensable for essential and inspiring information.

Even such transient means of church publicity and evangelical mass-communication as the Christian press, religious broadcasting, film and television, could benefit much from such a planning on the long run. A planned background for their articles and programmes is felt as something which would bear more fruit. Every day, every month, brings forward new aspects, unexpected features. But a faithful community that wants to multiply the talents entrusted to it and hopes to gain the victory in the great contest of the Holy and Eternal with the powers which are profane and ephemeral, must devise the finest and most thorough planning it can, and carry it out to the very end.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Mrs. Esme Wynne-Tyson, who often writes under the pseudonym, Diotema, has six published novels to her own credit besides three more in collaboration with the late J. D. Beresford. She has contributed also to some thirty periodicals, including the *Manchester Guardian*, *Hibbert Journal*, *Contemporary Review* and *Punch*. She describes herself as unsectarian in her Christian affiliation. Her independent quest for the truth is commendation enough for us. (Article p. 63).

H. W. Tiebout, Jr., is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Illinois. His paper, one section of a larger paper 'The Theological Framework of Religious Liberalism' was originally delivered to a joint Unitarian-Universalist Ministers' Meeting at Allerton Park, Illinois. Professor Tiebout comes from the Unitarian Church, Urbana, Illinois. (Article p. 67).

Colin J. Gibson, M.A., has been a Unitarian Minister in Australia since 1945—first at Sydney, and, since 1949, at Adelaide. He took his first degree at Melbourne in 1933 and trained for the Ministry at Manchester College, Oxford, 1933-36. (Article p. 71).

John Redwood Anderson has standing in England for his published verse. Amongst much we would commend we name 'The Vortex', 'Transvaluations', 'The Tower of Heaven' and 'Paris Symphony'. See our appreciation, "John Redwood Anderson, Poet and Seer" in this Journal, Vol. 1, p. 73; also his own "The Fourth Mysticism" in Vol. IV, Parts 2 and 3. (Article p. 81).

Rudolph Boeke is Pastor of a liberal Christian congregation in Rotterdam (temporarily) after a longer pastorate at Hogebeintum in Friesland. He was one of a notable party of Dutchmen who attended the I.A.R.F. Congress in Chicago last year. (Article p. 87).